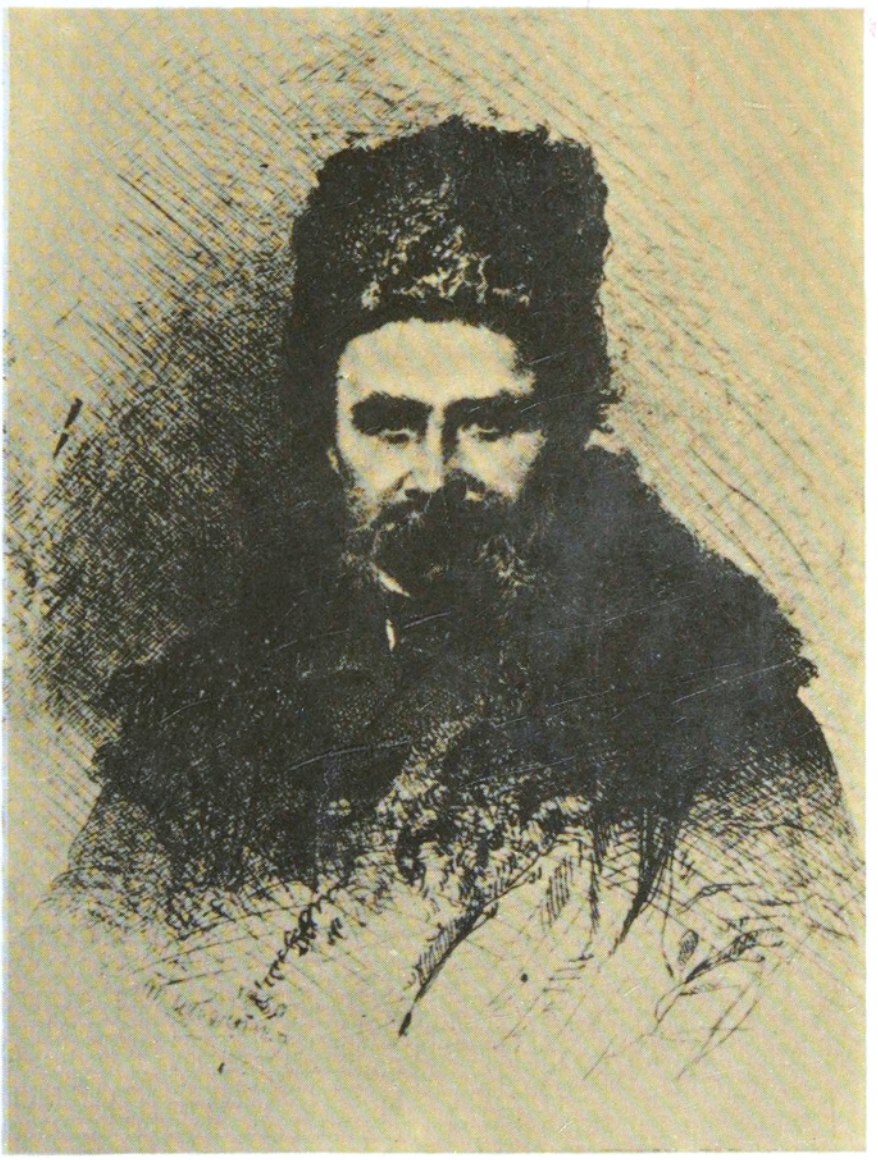
PROGRESS · CLASSICS SERIES

TARAS SHEVCHENKO
Selected Works



PROGRESS · CLASSICS SERIES

TARAS SHEVCHENKO

Selected Works
Poetry and Prose

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
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CONTENTS

Page

A Great Humanist Poet by Yevgeny Kirilyuk 11

POETRY

The Bewitched * 21
"Thoughts of Mine" * 28
Perebendya 32
Katerina 51
Haidamaki 72
Introduction 79
The Red Banquet 81
Hupalivshchina 86
Gonta in Uman 90
Epilogue 98
Hamaliya 118
Sorrowful Nights * 124
A Dream 126
"Don't take yourself a wealthy bride" 142
The Heretic 143
The Servant Woman 154
The Caucasus 169
To the Dead, the Living and the Unborn * 175

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Testament 183
The Lily 184
"I care not if 'tis in Ukraine" * 187
"'Stay with your mother, maid!' they told you" * 188
"The sun of spring in lightsome glee" * 190
"Beside the hut the cherries are in bloom" * 191
"Hard is a captive's lot" * 192
The Princess 193
N. N. ("Sunset....The mountains lie sombre and shadowed") * 206
N. N. ("I was thirteen. I herded lambs") 207
The Monk * 209
The Outlaw 213
Kings 219
"Had we two met again" * 227
Marina 228
"Thick, torpid waves, skies dull and sightless" * 238
"Young masters, if you only knew" 239
The Half-Wit 242
A Dream * 245
"I'm not unwell" 246
Isaiah. Chapter 35 247
N. N. ("A lily of as tender beauty") * 249
"Brown eyes have I" * 250
To My Sister * 251
"At times I hang my head in sorrow" * 253
Mary 254
The Hymn of the Nuns * 276
"Speak, my good, my gentle people" * 277
To Likera * 278
"Wine was a potion Galileo" * 279
"The days go by, the nights go by" * 280

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"By a spring a sycamore" * 281
"The time has come, my humble neighbour" * 282

PROSE

The Artist 287
Diary (Excerpts) 399

DRAMATIC WORKS

Nazar Stodolya * 479

NOTES 527

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A GREAT HUMANIST POET

Speaking at the International Forum of Cultural Workers dedicated to Taras Shevchenko and held in Kiev * Rockwell Kent, the American artist who was equally famous as a writer and a courageous fighter for world peace, said that outstanding critics compared Shevchenko's poems with the works of such great poets and writers as Pushkin, Goethe, Byron and Hugo. Rockwell Kent went on to say that he would add the name of William Blake—the English poet whose 200th birth anniversary had been celebrated by all progressive mankind—to the number of the great geniuses of the West. In many respects Blake resembled Shevchenko. Like Shevchenko, he was both an artist and a poet, and like Shevchenko—a passionate revolutionary.

Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) was indeed a great poet, a superb artist, and a revolutionary democrat.

He was born into a serf family in the village of Kirilovka, Kiev Gubernia, but for all the wretchedness and hardships of his childhood there were bright moments in it which facilitated the development of his talent. All children like to draw, but with young Taras it was a passion, an overpowering calling. The artist they had in the village was willing to give Taras lessons, but only if the master, Baron Engelhardt, sanctioned it. The boy was taken into the manor house as a *kazachok* (a boy lackey), and then when he was fourteen years old the master took him to Vilno (Vilnius) with him. Here, for the first time in his life, Taras Shevchenko saw people who were of common stock like himself but were free men, not serfs, and for the first time he heard foreign speech: Lettish, Polish and Russian.

* *Vsenarodna shana* (National Pride), a collection, Kiev, 1967, p. 339.

And then came another bright moment in his joyless life: his master took him to the beautiful museum-city of St. Petersburg. Taras knew misery here as well, but humane Russian people came to his rescue and freed him from slavery. The great artist Karl Bryullov, known throughout the world for his painting "The Last Day of Pompeii", painted a portrait of the prominent poet Zhukovsky and sold it for 2,500 rubles. With this money he bought out the young serf from his master. Shevchenko was admitted to the Academy of Arts where he studied under Bryullov, and the two became close friends. For his drawings Shevchenko was awarded three silver medals and had the title of Artist conferred upon him. Towards the end of his life in 1860, he was awarded the title of Academician in engraving. His major work was the album of etchings entitled "Picturesque Ukraine" (1844) which established him as the founder of critical realism in Ukrainian art. Had he devoted his life to painting he would have undoubtedly become one of the most outstanding artists of his epoch.

But it was while working in Bryullov's sumptuous studio that he became compellingly aware of his second and main calling, his true passion—poetry. Here, in St. Petersburg, he did not for a minute forget the plight of his own Ukraine, groaning under the yoke of serfdom. He wrote poems in Ukrainian and in 1840 published his first book of verse entitled *Kobzar*. The poet's credo was expressed in the opening poem "Thoughts of Mine" which reflected the thoughts and sentiments of the Ukrainian people who, at the time, were oppressed both socially and nationally. The dramatic centre of the volume is the poem "Katerina" describing the tragedy of a defenseless Ukrainian peasant girl. Shortly afterwards Shevchenko painted a picture of "Katerina" in oil.

This first book of verse published by Shevchenko showed the wide scale of his aesthetic programme. Ivan Franko, one of Shevchenko's followers, was to say: "This small book instantly revealed to us a new world of poetry, and like a spring of pure, cold water it sparkled with a crystallike clearness, simplicity and poetic gracefulness heretofore unknown in Ukrainian literature."

A year later, Shevchenko published his historical poem "Haidamaki" about the heroic uprising of the peasants, supported by the Zaporozhian Cossacks, against the Polish feudal lords in 1768. The protest against tsarism is expressed in the line: "The executioner rules...." implying Tsar Nicholas I. The young poet's internationalism found its first expression in "Haidamaki". To begin with, Shevchenko dreamed of a broad unification of Slav peoples. Later, this dream matured into an understanding of the need to unite all the peoples inhabiting Russia, and towards the end of his life—of all the toilers of the world.

The basic qualities distinguishing Shevchenko's poetry are embodied in the very first books of verse he published: he was truly a people's poet, his poetry was stirringly lyrical, emotional, and umbilically linked with the folk oral tradition. Ivan Franko spoke of Taras Shevchenko's profound sincerity, the plasticity of his expression for all its simplicity, his pure and beautiful language which contained all the succulence of

Ukrainian folk songs with their melancholy undertone relieved by delicate humour.

Living in St. Petersburg, where he made the acquaintance of progressive-minded people and came to know the history of the revolutionary movement, shaped his revolutionary-democratic world outlook. And so when he returned to the Ukraine in 1843, the appalling social and national oppression to which the masses were subjected was revealed to him in all its starkness.

The eternal problems of life remained his main theme, but his poems were now acquiring a political content while losing none of their emotional expressiveness or artistic excellence. The first and most outstanding poem of this kind was "A Dream" (1844), which Shevchenko called a "comedy" by analogy with Dante's "Divine Comedy". In a fantastic flight over the Ukraine, Siberia and St. Petersburg he shows, like the great Dante, the circles of hell—that is, the reality of serfdom. The manner in which the poem was written suggested to some critics that it as a "poetic fresco". In it, Shevchenko exposed not the separate vices of autocratic rule and serfdom but the entire system of the unjust social order from the bottom up to the Emperor himself. Speaking of the universal significance of Shevchenko's work, Ivan Franko compared "A Dream" with the political writings of Heine and Hugo.

Later, Shevchenko wrote "The Caucasus", prompted by the news of a friend's death—an artist who had illustrated his poems. "The Caucasus" is, in fact, a lyrico-epic invective, a passionate protest against the whole autocratic and serf-owning system. In this poem, which demonstrated the breadth of his political thinking, Shevchenko demanded freedom not only for his own Ukrainian nation but for all the peoples belonging to the Russian Empire. Many of the lines in this poem which was circulated in hand-written copies became slogans often used by outstanding Ukrainian and Russian revolutionaries.

Taras Shevchenko was a humanist poet, but humanism is a social, historical category, and in all times and ages it has had a class content. He realised that in his lifetime he was not to witness the liberation of the people, but in his famous "Testament" he proclaimed the only right course towards the attainment of the longed-for freedom:

Oh bury me, then rise ye up
And break your heavy chains
And water with the tyrants' blood
The freedom you have gained.

The "Testament" ended on a hopeful note that one day the peoples of the Russian Empire would become united into a big, free family, and that his name would be remembered by the subsequent generations of his great country's free and equal citizens.

And in the great new family,
The family of the free,
With softly spoken, kindly words,
Pray, men, remember me.

These beautiful words have been carved out on many of the monuments erected to the memory of the great poet, a fighter for freedom.

Besides his rousing political calls to struggle, he wrote lyrical verses of beautiful subtlety. Only few of his numerous lyrical poems have been included in this selection, but they will give readers an idea of his sensitively tender soul (especially "The Days Go By").

The theme of the sufferings of the Ukrainian serf woman runs through his entire work. While his Katerina is defeated by her tragedy and commits suicide, his Hanna in "The Servant Woman" dedicates her life to the son she has been compelled to let others adopt, and endures the tragic need to keep her secret from him through life.

Taras Shevchenko knew that tsarist censorship would never let him print his passionate revolutionary poems, and so he wrote them out by hand in an album entitled "Three Years" (1843-1845). Still, he did not give up hope of publishing a new collection one day and wrote a preface for it. This preface has been preserved, and in it he strongly expresses his aesthetic views and his desire to embark Ukrainian literature on the course of critical realism and make it a truly people's literature. He mentions Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns, calling the latter a "great, people's poet".

In the poem "The Wake", written in Russian, Shevchenko's hero is a realistically thinking man of whom he says:

In a Byronic mist
He did not wreathe himself...

Shevchenko did not stop at merely expressing his revolutionary-democratic views and ideas in literature, but joined a secret anti-serfdom society. An agent provocateur informed against the society, and all the members were arrested and taken to St. Petersburg for trial. Although no proof was found to convict Taras Shevchenko, he was given the cruellest punishment of all for his revolutionary verses. When he was arrested, the gendarmes requisitioned Shevchenko's album "Three Years" in which they found verses directed against the Emperor and Empress. He was sentenced to serve as a private in the Detached Orenburg Corps, and Nicholas I added to the verdict in his own hand: "...forbidden to write and to paint". The term of army service at the time was 25 years. And so the tsar hoped to kill in Shevchenko both the poet and the artist. But Taras Shevchenko refused to be broken. Even in prison he went on writing verses on bits of paper. Eventually he entitled this cycle of verses "In Prison", and included in it one of his lyrical masterpieces "Beside the Hut the Cherries Are in Bloom".

He was put in uniform and sent under escort to Orenburg. Before he was there many a day he was again writing verses in spite of the tsar's forbiddance, putting them down in the tiny note-books he made himself, small enough to hide in the legs of his boots. A little later he also began to draw.

Eventually, he spoke of the poems he had written in exile as a "Prisoner's Muse". What strikes us in them is the poet's staunchness: "I suffer punishment and anguish, but I don't repent." In "The Princess" and "The Outlaw" he speaks out resolutely against serfdom. The new feature in these accusatory poems of his exile period is a portrayal of individual types of serf-owners and also of the people's avengers (the outlaw and Marina, for instance).

His revolutionary passion reaches a pitch in his condemnation of monarchial oppression in all times and ages. In the cycle "Kings" he speaks of King David and of the Kievan Prince Vladimir who has been canonized, but at the end making a broad generalisation he says:

May they be hanged, the bloody butchers,
And cursed....

While in exile, Shevchenko also wrote a large number of lyrical poems, among them some autobiographical ones. Mention should be made of "I Was Thirteen", "Young Masters, If You Only Knew", and "The Lights Are Blazing". Numerous lyrics, in imitation of folk songs, were written in this same period.

In the tsarist army, the men were more hazed than drilled and treated as something below a human being. But here, too, there were humane people among the senior officers. When an expedition was formed to explore the Aral Sea (1848-49), Captain-Lieutenant Butakov included Shevchenko in it as an artist, taking the risk of disobeying the tsar's orders. During the two years with the expedition Shevchenko produced more than 250 watercolours, both landscape and genre.

Upon the expedition's return to Orenburg, Shevchenko was kept on to process the materials they had brought back. But in 1850, one of the officers turned informer, and Shevchenko was again arrested, tried, and banished still further away, to the Novopetrovsk fortress on the Mangyshlak Peninsula on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. (The town has been named Shevchenko).

He was under stricter surveillance now, but there are good people everywhere, and the very next year, 1851, he was again taken on as an artist by a coal prospecting party setting out for the Karatau mountains.

By permission of Commandant Uskov, Shevchenko had begun to write stories in Russian, hoping to publish them under another name in Russian journals. Alas, it was years after his death that they were eventually published.

While other political prisoners were amnestied after the death of Nicholas I, Shevchenko's name was crossed out from the list submitted for the approval of the new Tsar Alexander II, who said: "That one, I cannot pardon—he insulted my mother." Still, thanks to the efforts of Russian revolutionary democrats, Shevchenko was finally released. In 1857, he left for Astrakhan, and from there went by steamship up the Volga to Nizhni-Novgorod. He was detained here, for he was denied entry into Moscow and St. Petersburg. Once again, Russian progressives

interceded for him, and in 1858 Shevchenko came to Moscow and then went on to St. Petersburg.

A revolutionary situation arose in Russia at the end of the 1850's. Emancipation, which the landowners hoped to turn to their own profit, was in the making. In St. Petersburg, Shevchenko found himself among the capitals' progressives who took a keen interest in him. He met Chernyshevsky, Sierakowski and other oustanding Russian and Polish revolutionaries.

He resumed work at the Academy of Arts, and soon had a flat-cum-studio allotted to him (now the Shevchenko Memorial Museum).

He took up writing again, revising and polishing the things he had written in exile. The result was the *Big Book*, as distinct from the *Small Book* which contained his verses from the tiny note-books he carried in his boot legs.

Owing to his closeness with Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Nekrasov and other outstanding revolutionary democrats who contributed to the progressive journal *Sovremennik*, Shevchenko clearly saw the anti-popular nature of the coming reform, and advocated solving the peasant question in a different, a revolutionary way. Hoping to outwit the censors he utilised the form of psalms or Aesopian fables to get his message safely across. This technique had already served him well before his arrest in his translations and interpretations of "Psalms of David". They were not translations now, and imitations but seldom. Using the fabric and certain images of the Bible, he created original works on Biblical themes. One example is his "Isaiah. Chapter 35" in which he paints a romantic picture of a country reborn, and the happy life of the people liberated by revolution.

The poem "Mary" was a more ambitious work. While preserving some of the elements of the biblical story, Shevchenko actually created an entirely original work whose personages are ordinary people, preachers of justice, recognizable as fighters for the emancipation of the serfs. For this they are persecuted, and for this they die. Such is the image of Maria's crucified son.

In the autobiographical triptych "Destiny", "Muse" and "Fame" we perceive an image of Man in all his integrity.

In 1859, the government gave Shevchenko permission to return to the Ukraine, but placed him under the strictest police surveillance. On July 15 he was arrested for the third time for "inciting talks with the peasants". In view of the revolutionary situation, the authorities decided against making a case of it. Shevchenko was released in Kiev, but ordered to return to St. Petersburg at once. His health, undermined by ten years of exile and the hardships of soldiership, was quickly deteriorating, and on March 10, 1861, he died. His funeral was attended by prominent Russian writers and students who carried the coffin to the grave. Speeches were made in Ukrainian, Russian and Polish. In May, his remains were disinterred and taken to the Ukraine where, as he had willed in his "Testament", they were buried on Chernechya hill overlooking the Dnieper, near the town of Kanev. His grave is revered

as a shrine not only by the Ukrainians, but also by working people and progressives everywhere in the world.

The first translations of Taras Shevchenko's poems into Russian, Polish and Czech were made in his lifetime. The *Kobzar* came out in Russian in 1860, and translations into Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, German, English, Italian, Slovak, Slovene, and other languages appeared in quick succession.

Shevchenko was conversant with world literature, in particular with English literature. One of his best loved writers was Shakespeare. A composition of his drawings illustrating *King Lear* was lithographed and published in 1843 in a special publication on the art of engraving.

The life story of Taras Shevchenko in English first appeared in 1880. The lines of verse quoted in it were actually the first translations of Shevchenko into English. These translations have been re-printed many times, and some of them are highly valued till this day.

Taras Shevchenko was the founder of a new Ukrainian literature. He disclosed the potentialities of Ukrainian, and established it as the national literary language. Shevchenko's work played an enormous role in the development of democratic literature in Russia, and of all Slav literatures.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin thought very highly of the Ukrainian bard. In 1914, he published a strong protest against the tsarist government's ban on the celebration of the great Ukrainian poet's centennial.

Monuments to Taras Shevchenko have been erected in many cities of the Soviet Union, and also abroad. In the Ukraine, Shevchenko prizes are awarded annually for outstanding works of literature and art.

By decision of the World Peace Council and UNESCO, Taras Shevchenko death and birth anniversaries were celebrated on a world-wide scale in 1961 and 1964. In 1961 a complete bibliography of Taras Shevchenko's works published in Great Britain was brought out in London.

Yevgeny Kirilyuk

POETRY

THE BEWITCHED

The Dnieper wept and moaned, a piercing
Wind blew and bent the willows nigh
To very ground, and, howling fiercely,
Raised foam and billows mountain high.
A pale moon out the clouds was peeking,
'Twould sink from sight, then reappear,
Much like a boat that, refuge seeking,
Bobs up and down upon the sea.
Then, just 'fore dawn, the sounds grew muted,
No cocks crowed, in the wood beside
The stream, the brown owls softly hooted
And drying ash trees groaned and sighed.

'Neath the hill, on that dark night,
By the wood that, sombre,
Hung above the stream, a white,
Wraith-like figure wandered.
Was't a youthful mermaid[1] this
Come to seek her mother
Or to tickle and to kiss
Some brave lad or other?—
Nay, a maid!... A Gypsy had
Cast a spell upon her,
And the shore, forlorn and sad,
Looking for her lover,
Roamed she thus.... In spring had she
And her Cossack parted....
Was he dead?... How solemnly,

As she broken-hearted,
Stood before him, had he sworn
To return.... O hated,
Cruel lot! To meet no more
Were the lovers fated?
Slain did he and moveless lie,
His dear face uncovered?
Would her tears not burn his eyes?
Were those eyes beloved
Pecked by kites while lay he there,
In a distant meadow?
Did the wolves to pieces tear
His white flesh?... A shadow
Falls upon the maiden's face....
Vainly has she waited
For her dear one's warm embrace;
Ne'er will he unplait her
Braids for her, alas, or tie,
Proud, her kerchief bridal.
In a lonely grave he'll lie,
Not in bed beside her.

Aye, such is her fate, such her destiny bitter....
O merciful God, must thou punish her so!
An orphan, 'thout mother or father or sister,
She gave all her love, all her heart's youthful glow
To him, to her Cossack!... Forgive her, forgive her!
As lone as a fledgling flown far from its nest
Is she.... Do not let people mock her.... Pray, give her
The joy she deserves! Let this maiden be blest
With all true love's gladness and warmth!... Is't the fault of
The dove that she cares for her blue-winged mate?
And he—is't his fault that he's slain by a falcon?...
In vain does the sorrowing dove for him wait,
In vain does she seek him, in vain does she call him
And hither and thither despairingly fly!...
But God treats her kindly—in search of her fallen,
Her long-absent mate she can soar to the sky,
The seat of the Maker....

Not so our poor orphan:
Not far can she go.... Is her love in yon wood?
Is he on the shore of the Danube?... How often
The thought comes to her that another is wooed
By him and that she is betrayed.... Ah, if only
To fly it were given her, fast would she wing
Across the blue seas, join her lover, and lonely
No more be.... The love of her heart she would bring
Full gladly to him if alive she did find him;
If faithless, her rival she'd strangle; if dead,
His grave make her own.... When to pain it is wed,
The spirit rebels, but its sufferings blindly
Is yet forced to bear.... Poor, lost maid! She's
undone!...
Her fate has been shaped! Heaven's will will be
done!

She walks in silence by the Dnieper
That now is mute.... The wind has rent
The storm clouds ruthlessly, and, creeping
Onto the shore, lies still and spent.
From sunless sky onto the water
The silver moon its rays pours softly,
A perfect stillness reigns throughout....
Then, suddenly, a laughing crowd of
Young mermaids, bare of clothes, from out
The river depths emerges. Loudly,
The echoes wakening, they shout:
"How warm the air!..." (Their hair's not plaited
But twined with weeds.)
"Come, dear ones, late is
The hour, let's sup!" their mother calls.

. . . . . .

They reply in voices ringing:
"We'll be playing, we'll be singing.
The night shadows fall, fall,
We're water sprites all, all!
Our mothers they erred, erred,
Unbaptized we were, were.

O moon high above,
You bright-winged dove,
Join us, do, this night for supper;
On the river's sandy bottom
Lies a Cossack with a ring
On his finger glittering.
There are reeds and rushes round him,
In the wood last night we found him,
Young and dark of eye he is....
Cast your rays, O bright moon, please,
On the fields that we may play there
While the witches wax full gay there
And the cocks have not yet crowed....
Stay! Who's there beside the road?...
The night shadows fall, fall,
We're water sprites all, all!
Our mothers they erred, erred,
Unbaptized we were, were."

They laugh, and loud their voices carry
All o'er the forest and the shore;
Then for the oak together, merry,
They make and round it, silent, swarm.

As they stand there, in the shadows
Something gleams—a white-clad,
Graceful form, the tree embracing,
Starts to climb it lightly.
Lo!—'tis she, the very maiden
Whom the fortune-teller,
Wishing only to amuse her,
Thoughtless, put a spell on.
She has reached the topmost branches,
And she looks around her,
Then descends in haste.... Poor orphan!
How her heart is pounding!...
Laughingly the sprites surround her....
Silently they waited,
Now they pounce.... They kiss and stroke
her—

She is dead!... 'Twas fated
From the first.... Upon her beauty
Long they gaze.... The crowing
Of a cock disturbs them. Startled,
In the Dnieper's flowing
Waters plunge the sprites and vanish....
All at once the trilling
Of a skylark rends the stillness,
And, the forest filling
With its plea, a cuckoo chatters
Loudly.... From a clearing
Comes a nightingale's sweet warbling....
Nearer, ever nearer
Daylight draws.... The sky is blushing
O'er the hills.... Beyond them,
Where the Poles once fought their battles,
Violet the rounded
Mounds are turning.... Now the forest
Starts awake and whispers,
But the maiden 'neath the oak tree
Never stirs.... Her sleep is
Deep, she does not hear the cuckoo
Calling to its nestlings,
Does not count its calls or listen
To the oak leaves rustling.

At that very hour a Cossack
Out the wood came riding.
Painfully his sable stallion
Bore him.... "Aye, my kindly
Friend and comrade," said the Cossack,
"You are spent and weary,
But 'tis soon a lass will meet us
By her gate.... We're nearly
There.... But stay—what if the lassie
Has betrayed your master?
What if she her love has given
To another?... Faster,
Faster go, my steed!" The stallion
Stumbles down the roadway.

Round the Cossack's heart suspicion
Snake-like coils and holds him
Tense.... He stares.... "Why, there's my
sweet lass
'Neath the oak tree sleeping!
'Twas to welcome me, I'll wager,
Came she here...." And leaping
From his horse's back, he hastens
To her side.... Dear Heaven!
Though her lips and eyes he kisses,
She'll not wake, not ever.
"Why, O why have we been parted!..."
Back he steps, then rushes
To the oak tree, and his proud head
'Gainst its rough trunk smashes.

Bound for the field, a group of lasses
Goes singing by. They sing of those
Who with the Tatars cross their lances
Far from their sweethearts and their homes.
They pass an oak; without its rider
A horse stands there, the lassies see,
And near it, a young maid beside him,
A Cossack lies beneath the tree.
Up to the two they creep, delighted;
To tease the youthful pair—what fun!
Then, seeing they are dead, affrighted,
Away in sudden panic run.

See—the lassies stand a'weeping,
They don't laugh or sing,
While the lads two graves in silence
Slowly start to dig.
Bells are tolling, priests are chanting,
O'er the dead they pray.
By the Lord's command the lovers
Laid to rest are they.
By the wayside near the forest
In their graves they lie.
None, methinks, will learn, not ever,

How they came to die.
At his head a spruce was planted
And a sycamore,
And at hers, a flaming rowan,
And forevermore,
Side by side the two will sleep
there,
And a songbird's trill
O'er their lonely graves will carry
All night long it will.
'Twill be heard while o'er
the Dnieper
Steals the moon's bright ray,
And the mermaids in its cool
light
Warm themselves and play.

St. Petersburg,
1837

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Thoughts of mine, O thoughts of mine,
You plague and torment me!
On paper you throng, thoughts,
By dark anguish sent me.
Why did wind not disperse you?
Why were you not smothered
While still in the cradle
By sorrow, your mother?...

For the world to mock at born were you, upon you
Tears rained down in torrents—why did they not drown
you
In the sea or merge you with the steppeland waters?...
None would then have wondered why I suffer, none
Would have asked why curse I destiny or sought to
Lecture me and mutter: "Nothing to be done!"
Jestingly....
Come, tell me, children mine, my cherished
Blooms—is there a heart, dears, anywhere like this
Aching heart of mine, dears, one on salt tears nourished,
That will weep like mine does?... Let us hope there is!

If a maid's heart and a pair of
Brown eyes over you
Weep, my thoughts, I'll ask for nothing
More: a tear or two
From those eyes, and I am king of
Kings upon this earth!
Thoughts of mine, O thoughts of mine,
'Tis sorrow gave you birth.

Ah, those eyes so brown and sparkling,
And those brows so dark!...
It is they my heart awaken,
Make it pound, and—hark!—
Laugh in glee, and pour out verses,
Sing, and whisper of
Starry nights, and cherry orchards,
And a dear maid's love,
And my sweet Ukraine.... My heart is
Silent and forlorn.
Sing 'twill not, for it is parted
From its land and home.
Here, where snows lie deep, to council,[2]
With their maces bright
And *bunchuks*, the Cossacks merry
It will not invite.
Let their spirits roam the distant
Steppes of the Ukraine,
Boundless steppes where winds fly freely
And where gladness reigns.
Breadth and space.... The mounds are
mountains....
Vaster than a sea
Is the Dnieper, like our long-lost
Cossack liberty
That was born, that rode and pranced there
All those years ago
And the steppeland with the Tatars
And the Poles did sow.
But its hot blood cooled, and slumber
Came, and lo!—it bound
Fast its limbs, and soon above it
Grew a fresh new mound.
O'er the mound an eagle watches,
Black-winged, menacing,
And of all that passed the minstrels
In their songs they sing.
Old and blind, they sing of freedom
And of fame.... But I
Cannot sing, for words escape me,

I can only cry
For Ukraine, my homeland.... Sorrow,
Curse it, leaves me mute!....
All have known it, all have tasted
Of its bitter fruit.
As for him who with his heart's eye
Sees us all—a hell
Is this world for him, so help me,
And the next—
Ah, well!...
Never knew I joy, nor will it
Come to me if I
Grieve 'thout end.... Let grief
be short-lived,
Let it snake-like lie
Coiled within my breast and hidden
From the evil sight
Of my foes.... And may its laughter
Reach them not.... By night
And by day my thoughts are ravens;
Let them croak while my
Heart, a songbird, trills and warbles,
While it softly sighs,
Sighs and moans with none to hear it
Or to taunt it... Pray,
Let me weep, and do not try to
Wipe my tears away.
Let them flow and flood the alien
Field till that a priest
Comes and covers me with alien
Earth.... Ah, me! No peace
Grief will bring me.... And if any
(I need say no more)
Us poor, homeless orphans envy—
Punish them, O Lord!

Thoughts of mine, O thoughts of mine,
Dear my children own!
Nurture you I did—but where,
Tell me, is your home?

To beloved Ukraine, my mother,
Make you haste and fly.
As for me, 'tis here I'll perish,
Here it is I'll die.
There you'll shelter find, my orphans,
Truth's unwavering flame,
Kindly words, a heart that's friendly,
Aye, and maybe fame.
And of you, Ukraine, my homeland,
This do I entreat:
Like your own, my foolish children,
Born of sorrow, greet!

St. Petersburg,
1839

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

PEREBENDYA[3]

Old Perebendya, minstrel blind,
Is known both near and far.
He wanders all the country 'round
And plays on his kobzá.
The people know the man who plays,
They listen and are glad,
Because he chases gloom away,
Though he himself is sad.
No matter what the weather holds,
His days and nights he spends
Without a shelter out-of-doors;
Misfortune dogs his steps,
And mocks his head with silver thatched,
But he no longer heeds;
He seats himself beside a hedge
And sings, "Oh rustling leaves!"
And singing, how he's all alone
He thinks and bows his head,
As melancholy sears his soul,
Alone beside the hedge.

That's what old Perebendya's like,
He's very changeful, too:
He'll sing about heroic deeds,
Then change to comic tunes;
To maidens on the commons grass
He'll sing of love and spring,
And at the inn for merry lads

Good rousing songs he'll sing;
For married couples at a feast
(Where mother-'n-law is strict)
Such songs as tell of women's grief
And hardship he will pick;
At market-place—of Lazarus,
Or else, a mournful lay
(So that the memory should live)
Of how the Sich was razed.
So that's what Perebendya's like,
Capricious in old age:
He'll sing a merry song and then
To one of tears he'll change.

Asweeping freely o'er the steppes,
The wind blows from afar.
Upon a mound the minstrel sits
And plays on his kobzá.
The boundless steppes, blue as the sea,
Reach out on every side;
The grave mounds also stretch away
Till they are lost to sight.
His grey moustache and thatch of hair
The wind blows every way,
Then it subsides and lends an ear
To the old minstrel's lay,
His heart's wild beat, the tears of sightless
eyes....
Then blows again....
This is his hide-away
Amid the steppe where nobody can spy
And where his words are scattered o'er the
plains
Away from human ears, the sacred words
Pronounced in free communion with God,
The praises sung in homage to the Lord.
His thoughts the while go floating on a cloud,
Like eagles in the blue they soar o'erhead
Till with their wings the very sky is churned;
They rest upon the sun and ask where it

Retires at night, how rises in the morn;
They listen as the sea its tale unfolds,
"Why are you mute?" they ask the mountain top,
Then back to the sky, for earth's full of woe;
In all the wide, wide world there's not a spot
For him who all things knows and hears and sees—
The secrets of the sun, and sea, and fields—
No one to bid him welcome with his heart.
He's all alone, as is the sun alone.
The people know him and they let him be....
But if they learned how he, alone, intones
Songs in the steppe, converses with the sea—
They would make sport of words that are divine,
And call him mad and from their midst they'd drive
Him off to die. "Go to the sea!" they'd say.

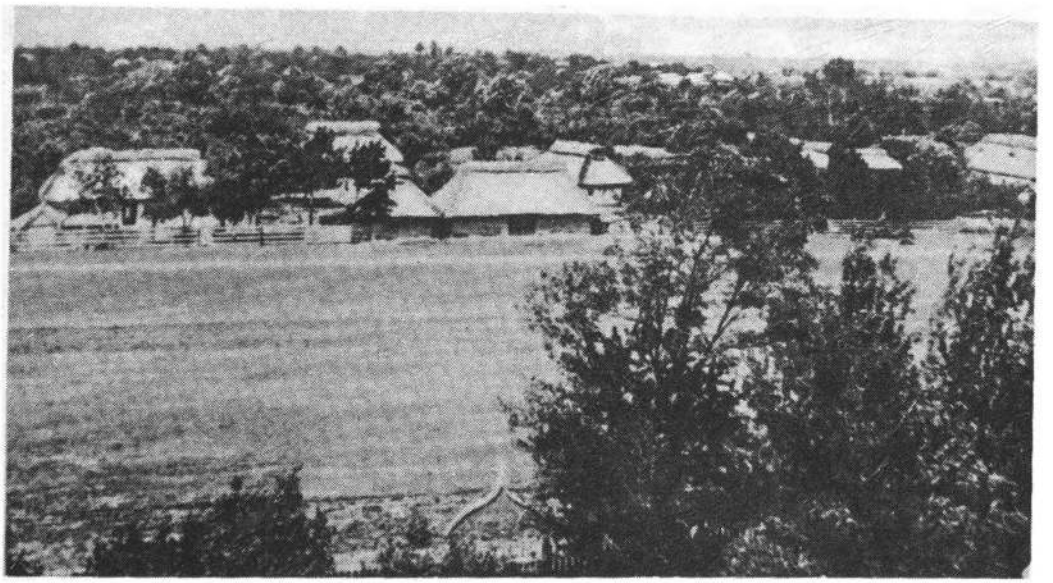
You're doing right, my minstrel friend,
You're doing right, I know,
That to the grave mound in the steppe
To talk and sing you go!
Keep going there, my hearty one,
Until the day your heart
Falls fast asleep, and sing your songs
Where you will not be heard.
And that the people shouldn't shy
You must indulge them, friend!...
So dance the way the master says—
The money's his to spend.

So that's what Perebendya's like,
Capricious in old age:
He'll sing a wedding song and then
To one of grief he'll change.

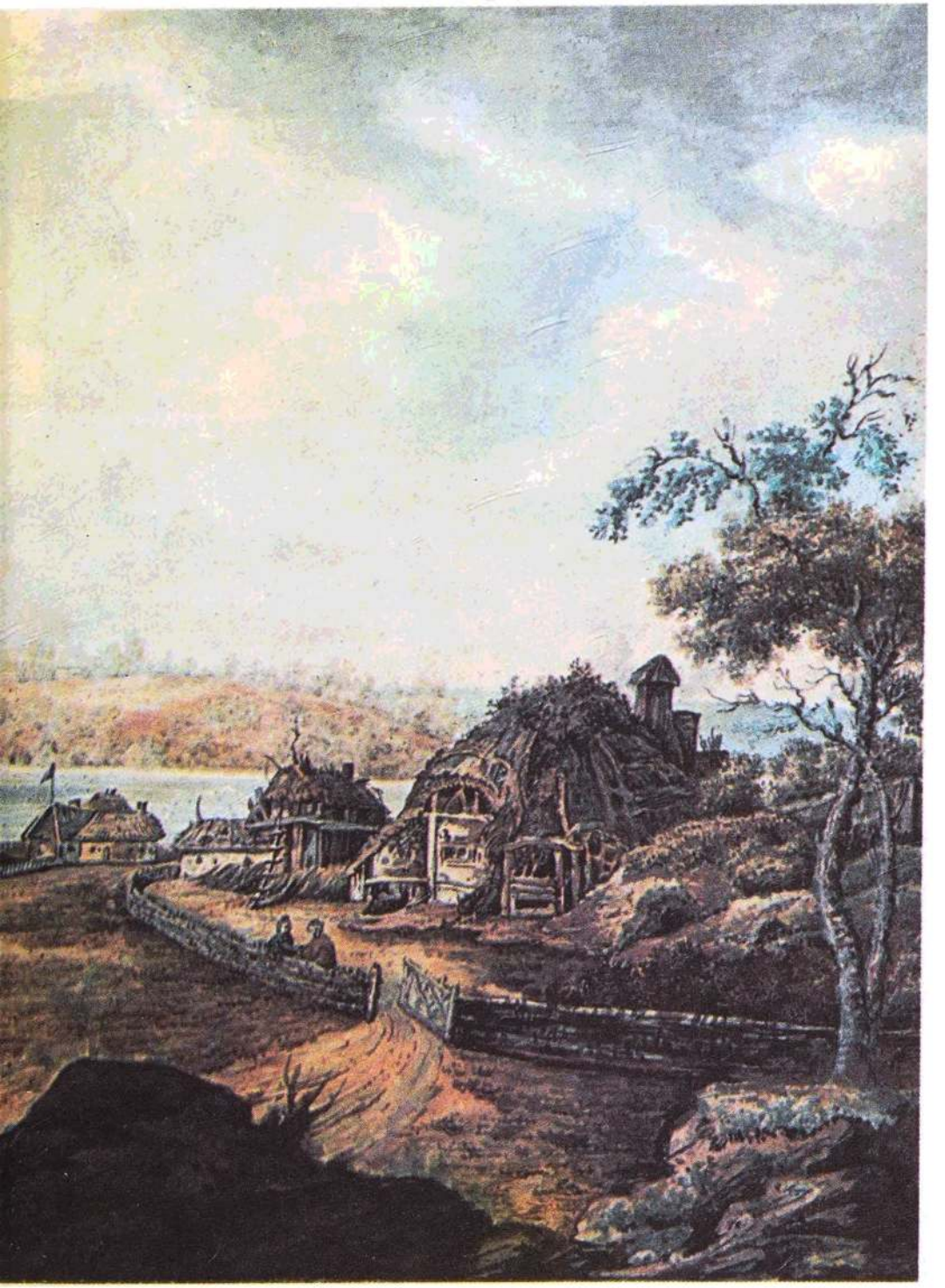
St. Petersburg,
1839

Translated
by John Weir

Taras Shevchenko's pencil drawing of his parents' cottage in Kirilovka. 1843



A view of Kirilovka where Taras Shevchenko spent his childhood. (Photograph 1914)



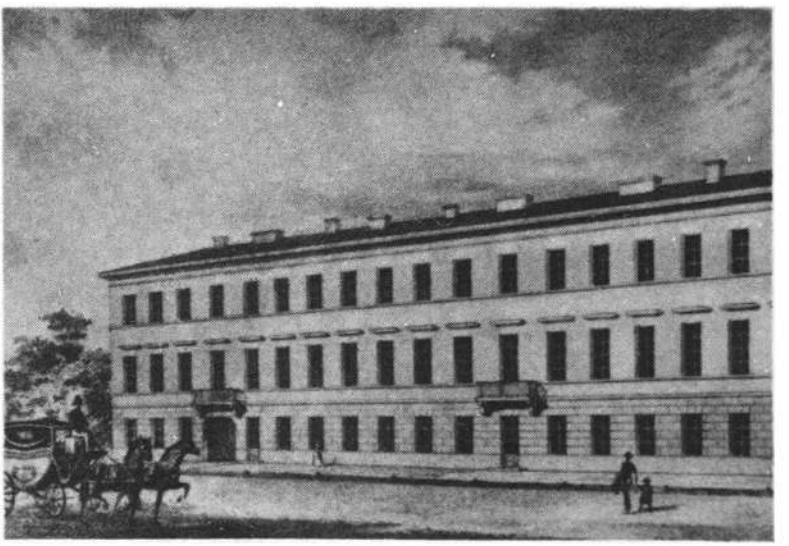
A. M. Kunavin. "The Village of Kubintsy". Water-colour. 1809

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait
of P. V. Engelhardt. Water-colour. 1833

A view of Vilnius (Vilno), first half of the 19th century. Lithograph

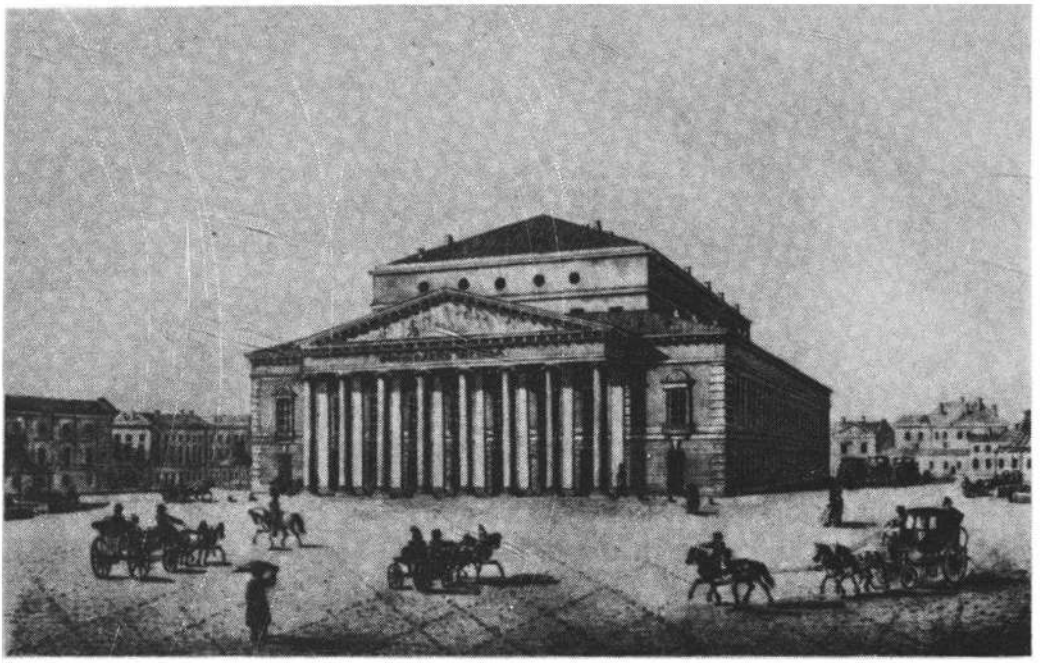
A drawing in black chalk by Taras Shevchenko. 1830

P. Y. Zabolotsky. Portrait of I. M. Soshenko. India ink. 1834



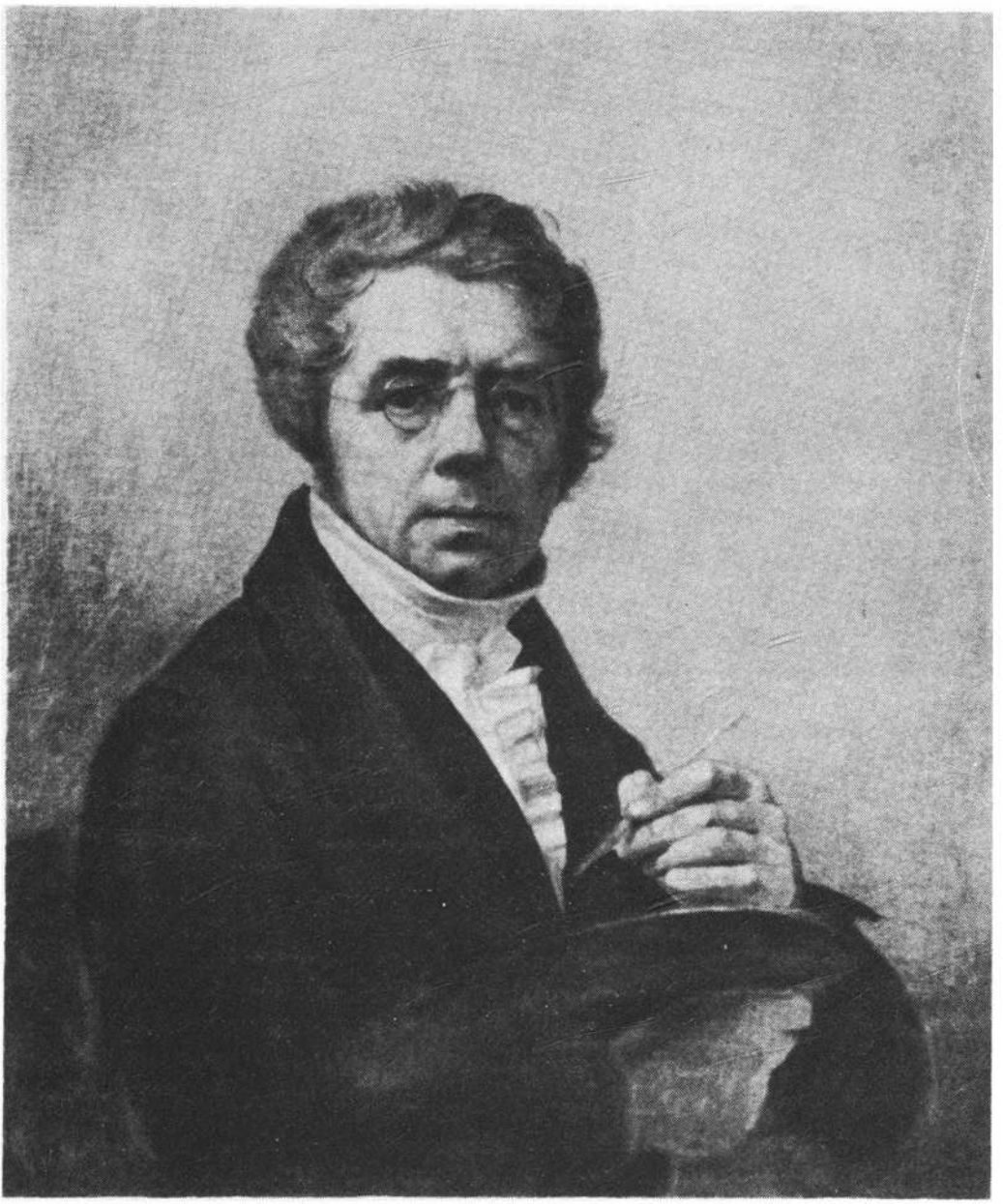
Taras Shevchenko lived in this house in Mokhovaya Street, St. Petersburg. Engraving from a drawing by V. S. Pakhomov

A glimpse of Peter the Great's palace in the Summer Gardens in St. Petersburg. (Lithograph by K. I. Begrov from a drawing by V. S. Sadovnikov, first half of the 19th century.) On white nights young Taras Shevchenko came to the Summer Gardens to draw, and at the same time composed his first tentative poems



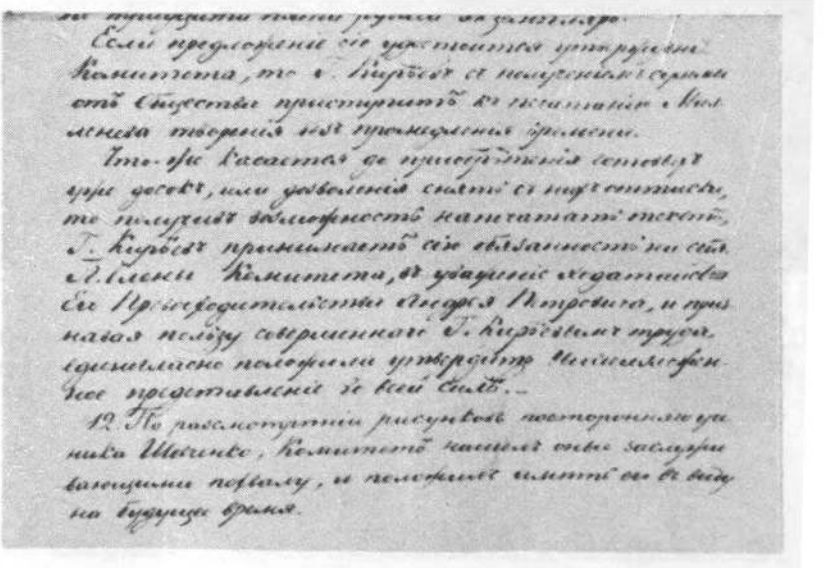
Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg. A 19th century engraving

Taras Shevchenko lived in this house (8, Zagorodny Prospekt, St. Petersburg) in 1832-1838. Engraving from a drawing by V. S. Pakhomov



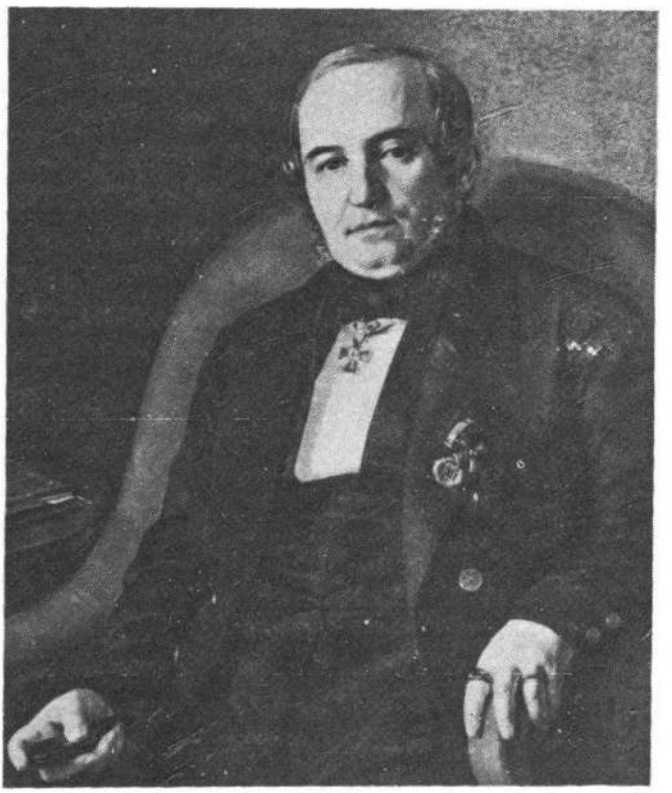
A. G. Venetsianov. Self-Portrait. 1810. He was one of the group of artists who helped to buy out Taras Shevchenko, then a serf, from his master in 1838

Taras Shevchenko. "The Death of Bogdan Khmelnitsky". India ink. 1836-1837



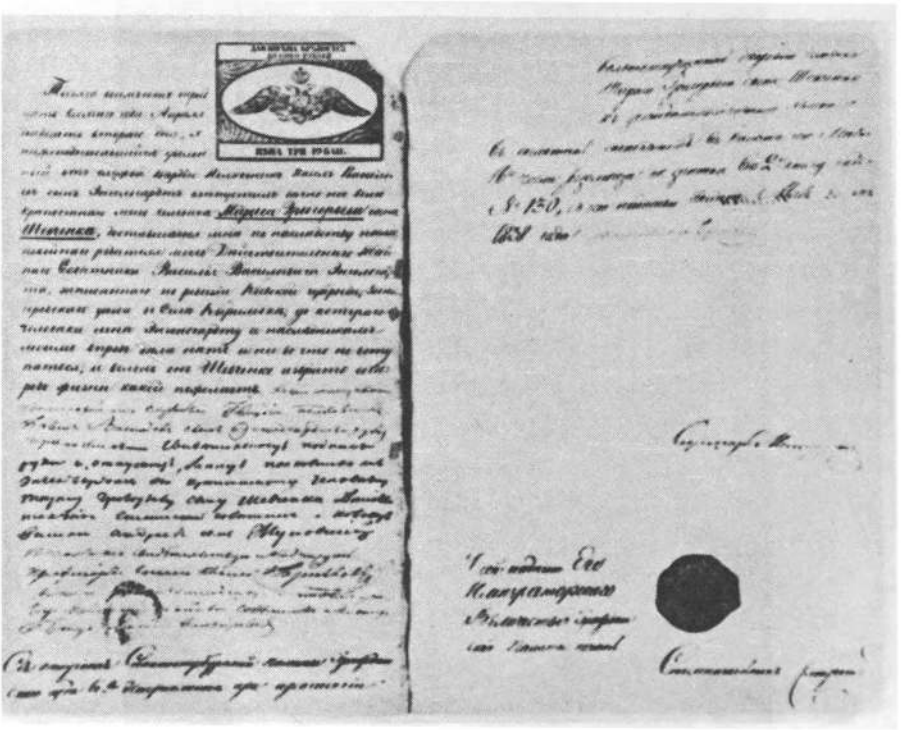
The Society for the Encouragement of Artists deemed Taras Shevchenko's drawings worthy of praise as stated above in the minutes of a meeting held on October 4, 1835

Portrait of M. Y. Vyelgorsky

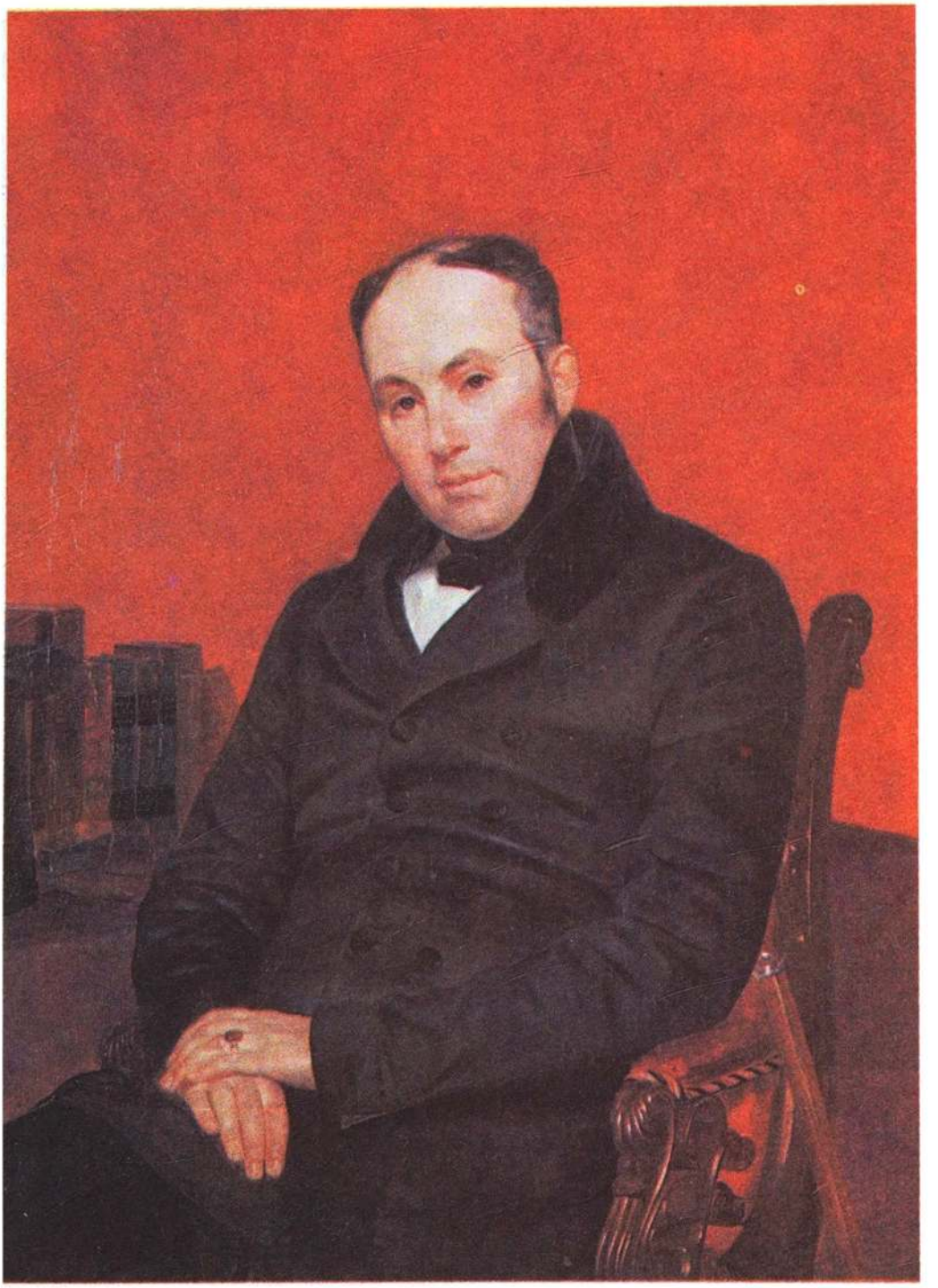


M. Lavrov. Portrait of V. Grigorovich.
Oil. 1849

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of Karl Bryullov. Pencil. 1835

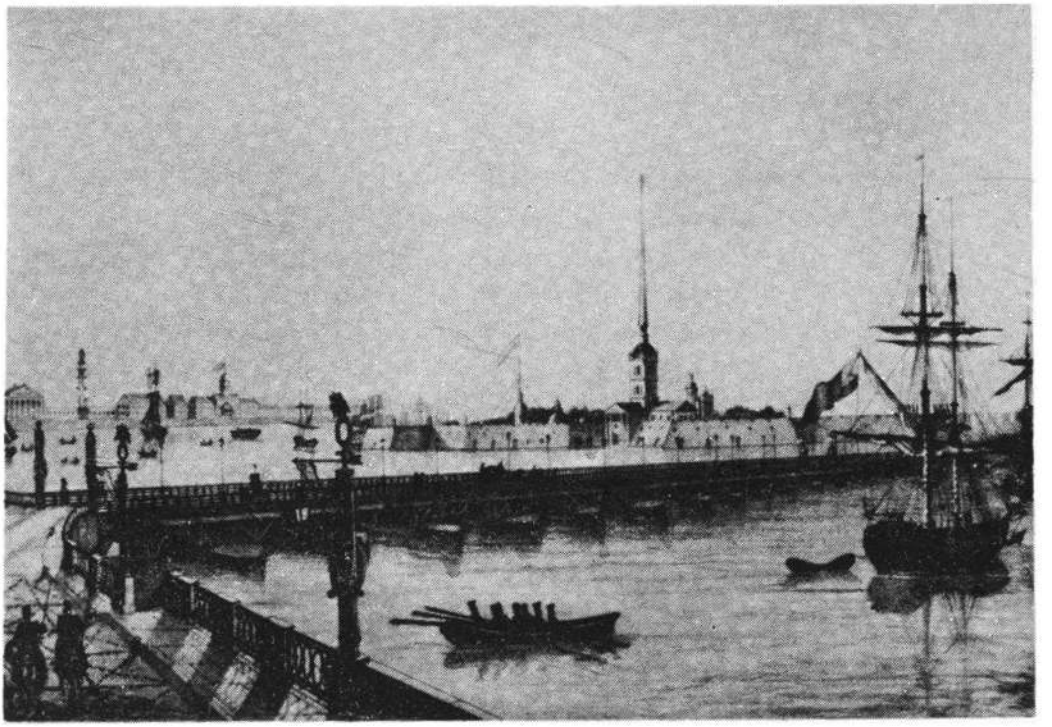


Taras Shevchenko's certificate of release from serfdom, April 22, 1838

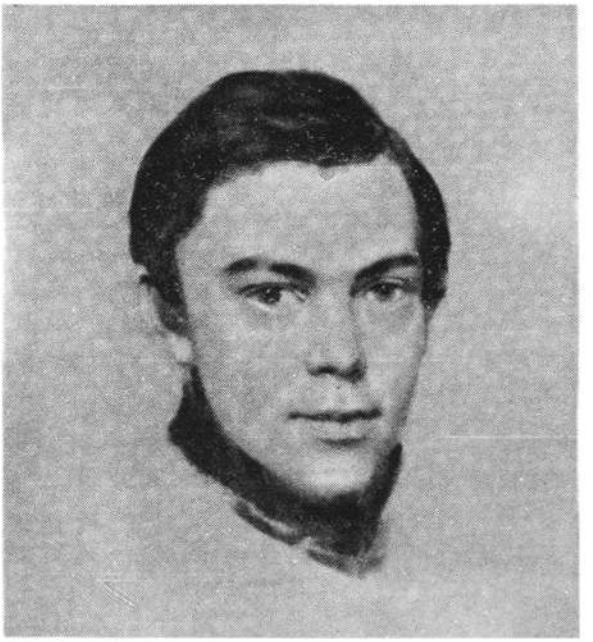


Karl Bryullov. Portrait of the poet Vassily Zhukovsky. Oil. 1838. Bryullov sold this portrait for 2,500 rubles and used the money to buy Taras Shevchenko's freedom

22. A view of the Academy of Arts from the Neva. Engraving



23. Troitsky Bridge in St. Petersburg. Lithograph by P. Schumann. First half of the 19th century
"I also liked to meet the sunrise on Troitsky Bridge. A marvellous, majestic picture!" T. Shevchenko, *The Artist*



24. V. I. Sternberg. Self-Portrait. Oil. 1838-1840

KATERINA

To V. A. Zhukovsky[4]
in memory of April 22, 1838

I

O lovely maidens, fall in love,
But not with Muscovites,[5]
For Muscovites are foreign folk,
They do not treat you right.
A Muscovite will love for sport,
And laughing go away;
He'll go back to his Moscow land
And leave the maid a prey
To grief and shame.... It could be
borne
If she were all alone,
But scorn is also heaped upon
Her mother frail and old.
The heart e'en languishing can sing—
For it knows how to wait;
But this the people do not see:
"A strumpet!" they will say.
O lovely maidens, fall in love,
But not with Muscovites,
For Muscovites are foreign folk,
They leave you in a plight.

Young Katerina did not heed
Her parents' warning words,
She fell in love with all her heart,
Forgetting all the world.
The orchard was their trysting place;
She went there in the night

To meet her handsome Muscovite,
And thus she ruined her life.
Her anxious mother called and called
Her daughter home in vain;
There where her lover she caressed,
The whole night she remained.
Thus many nights she kissed her love
With passion strong and true,
The village gossips meanwhile hissed:
"A girl of ill repute!"
Let people talk, let gossips prate,
She does not even hear:
She is in love, that's all she cares,
Nor feels disaster near.
Bad tidings came of strife with Turks,
The bugles blew one morn:
Her Muscovite went off to war,
And she remained at home.
A kerchief o'er her braids they placed
To show she's not a maid,
But Katerina does not mind,
Her lover she awaits.
He promised her that he'd return
If he was left alive,
That he'd come back after the war—
And then she'd be his wife,
An army bride, a Muscovite
Herself, her ills forgot,
And if in meantime people prate,
Well, let the people talk!
She does not worry, not a bit—
The reason that she weeps
Is that the girls at sundown sing
Without her on the streets.
No, Katerina does not fret—
And yet her eyelids swell,
And she at midnight goes to fetch
The water from the well
So that she won't by foes be seen;
When to the well she comes,

She stands beneath the snowball-tree
And sings such mournful songs,
Such songs of misery and grief,
The rose itself must weep.
Then she comes home—content that she
By neighbours was not seen.
No, Katerina does not fret,
She's carefree as can be—
With her new kerchief on her head
She looks out on the street.
So at the window day by day
Six months she sat in vain....
With sickness then was overcome,
Her body racked with pain.
Her illness very grievous proved,
She barely breathed for days....
When it was over—by the stove
She rocked her tiny babe.
The gossips' tongues now got free
rein,
The other mothers jibed
That soldiers marching home again
At her house spent the night.
"Oh, you have reared a daughter fair,
And not alone beside
The stove she sits—she's drilling
there
A little Muscovite.
She found herself a brown-eyed son....
You must have taught her how!..."
Oh fie on ye, ye prattle tongues,
I hope yourselves you'll feel
Someday such pains as she who bore
A son that you should jeer!
Oh, Katerina, my poor dear!
How cruel a fate is thine!
Where, with a fatherless young child,
A haven will you find?
Who'll ask you in and welcome you,
No husband at your side?

Your parents now are strangers too
It's hard with them to 'bide!

Now Katerina's well again;
Again out on the street
She gazes through the window pane,
While rocks her babe to sleep;
She looks in vain as days pass by....
Will it, then, never be?
She'd to the orchard go to cry
If people didn't see.
At sunset Katerina goes
To their old trysting spots,
Her baby cuddled in her arms,
And whispers as she walks:
"I waited here for him to come,
And here we stood and spoke,
While here... oh here... my son,
my son!"
And then her voice is choked.

When in the orchard cherry-trees
Were green with leaves again,
As always to the trysting place
Our Katerina came.
But now her heart's no longer light
And now she sings no more,
As waiting for her Muscovite
She did the spring before.
Now Katerina does not sing,
But curses her sad fate.
Ill-wishers in the meantime give
Free rein to spite and hate—
They are preparing evil things.
What can she undertake?
Her lover'd put a stop to this....
But he is far away,
He does not know that heartless folk
Harass his promised bride,
He does not see, he does not know

How Katerina cries.
Perhaps her lover's lying dead
Beyond the Danube wide;
Or maybe—back in Moscow land
He has another bride!
No, he's not killed, he is alive—
It can't be otherwise!
And where another could he find
With such fair face and eyes?
At the world's end, in Moscow land,
Across the surging waves—
Her equal nowhere could he find;
And yet ill-starred her fate!...
Her mother gave her a fair face,
And lovely eyes bestowed,
Yet how to give her happiness
Her mother did not know.
But beauty without fortune is
A flower in the grass—
Seared by the sun, bent by the winds,
And plucked by those who pass.
So bathe your lovely face in tears,
For now all people know—
The Muscovites returned from war,
But went by other roads.

II

Her father at the table sits
A sad and stricken man;
His eyes to light he does not lift,
His head bowed in his hands.
Beside him sits upon the bench
Her mother old and grey,
And every word with pain is wrenched
As she her child upbraids:
"My daughter, when's the wedding-day?
Where does your bridegroom rest?
Where are your bridesmaids, tell me pray,
And all the wedding guests?
They are far off in Moscow land!

So go and seek them there,
And don't tell anyone you have
A mother anywhere.
Be cursed the hour when you were born!
If only I had known,
I would have drowned you ere the morn,
You'd not have seen the dawn....
Then you'd have been the serpent's
prey,
While now—a Muscovite's....
Alas, my daughter, blossom gay!
Alas, my sunshine bright!
So tenderly I tended you,
So proud to see you grown,
Yet all my care is brought to ruin....
Oh dear, what have you done?
So that's your thanks!... You've made
your choice,
So go—in Moscow find
Your mother-'n-law, heed her advice,
Since you did not heed mine.
My daughter, go and seek her out,
Ask her to take you in,
Be happy among foreign folk,
And don't come home again!
Do not come back to us, my child,
From that land far away....
Oh who, without you, daughter mine,
Will lay me in the grave?
Who o'er my body will lament
As but a daughter weeps?
And who a guelder rose will plant
There where my body sleeps?
Who for my sinful soul will pray,
Alas, when you are gone?
My only child, my daughter dear!
Now go, leave us alone,
Go, go from us...."
With failing hand
She blessed her for farewell:

"May God be with you!" To the floor
She then unconscious fell....

Her grey-haired father then found
speech:
"What are you waiting for?"
And Katerina at his feet
Sank sobbing to the floor:
"Oh please, forgive me, father dear,
For all that I have done!
My darling dad, forgive me, please,
For what I did that's wrong!"
"May God forgive you," whispered he,
"May the good folk forgive;
Now pray and go—for us 'twill be
Less hard, perhaps, to live."

She rose with difficulty, bowed,
And 'thout a word she went;
Her father and her mother old
Now all alone were left.
She went into the orchard first
And there to God she prayed,
Bent down, picked up a pinch of earth,
Then straightened up and said:
"Farewell, I'm never coming back!
I know that far away
By strangers in a foreign land
I will be laid away;
This little pinch of native soil
Will on my grave be placed,
It will my hapless fate, my woe,
To strangers there relate....
Nay, let untold my tale remain
When I have fled this life,
Let folks forget my very name
And speak no word of spite.
You'll not recount my sorry lot....
But he—oh, he will tell
That I'm his mother! Oh, my God!

Where can I hide myself?
Beneath the waves my hiding-place
I'll find, I am afraid,
While you my sin will expiate—
A roving homeless waif
Without a father!"

And she wept
As down the village street,
Her baby in her arms, she went
With slow, reluctant feet.
The village now was left behind—
Her heart with sorrow ached;
She turned to look, then like a child
She stood and loudly wailed.
Beside the road, a poplar tall,
She stood lamenting long;
Her scalding tears fell fast as falls
The dew before the dawn.
She didn't see a thing for tears
Were streaming from her eyes,
She hugged her baby to her heart,
And kissed it as she cried.
The angel didn't understand,
Just felt the fond caress
And fumbled with its tiny hands
To find its mother's breast.
A flaming bowl, the sun went down
Behind the leafy wood;
She wiped her tears, then turned around
And trudged along the road....
Then she was gone. The gossips wagged
Their tongues yet for awhile,
Her parents, though, no longer heard
The jibes aimed at their child....

Such are the wrongs that people do
To people on the earth!
One person's jailed, another slain,
Himself destroys a third....
And all for what? Nobody knows.

The world is large and wide,
Yet some are homeless and alone,
And can't a shelter find.
Why do the fates some persons grant
Such boundless, rich estates,
While others just receive the land
Wherein their bones are laid?
Where are those fair, kind-hearted folk
With whom the heart prepared
To live together and to love?
Alas, they've disappeared!

On earth there is fortune—
On whom does it smile?
On earth there is freedom—
On whom does it shine?
On earth there are people—
All silver and gold.
They seem strong and wealthy,
Yet fortune don't know—
Nor fortune, nor freedom!
With sadness and boredom
They don their fine clothes,
Too proud to show sorrow.
Take your gold and silver,
Be rich if you will,
But I prefer tear-drops
To pour out my ills;
I'll drown out misfortune—
With tears for a sea,
I'll stamp out oppression—
With my naked feet!
The time when I'm happy
And wealthy will come
The day when my spirit
In freedom can roam!

III

The wood's asleep, the night-owls hoot,
The sky with stars is lit;

In amaranth across the road
The timid gophers flit.
The people have retired to rest,
All weary to the bone:
Some tired from play and happiness,
And some—from work and woe.
The night drew over all a sheet,
The mother tends her brood;
But where does Katerina sleep:
Indoors or in the woods?
Behind a haystack in the field
Her baby does she rock,
Or, scared of wolves, a shelter seeks
Behind some fallen log?
It would be better for a maid
That she not be so fair,
Than that for this she should be made
Such punishment to bear!
What fortune does the future hold?
Alas, it will be bad!
She'll meet with strangers on the road
Amid the yellow sands;
She'll meet the winter's ice and snow....
But him—ah, will she meet
The one who Katerina loves,
And who his son will greet?
If she were with him, all her ills,
Her woes would be forgot:
He'd speak to her with tender words
And hold her to his heart....

Well, we shall hear and we shall see....
And I will rest awhile,
The road which leads to Muscovy
From people I'll inquire.
Ah, brothers, it's a long, long road—
Alas, that road I know!
My very heart is gripped with cold
When I recall that road.
One time I trod that road myself—

Would I'd not known that trail!...
About that journey I would tell,
But who'd believe my tale?
"The so-and-so is telling lies!"
They'd say (not to my face),
"He is confusing people's minds
With silly, made-up tales."
You're right, good people, you are right!
Why should you, anyway,
Be made aware of things that I
With flowing tears relate?
What use is it? Each person has
Enough of his own griefs....
So let's forget it! Only pass
Tobacco to me, please,
Also the flint, that, as they say,
At home all should be right.
For if you'd hear my shocking tale,
You'd nightmares have at night!
So to the devil with it all!
While I had better map
The route our Katerina shall
With tiny Ivan tramp.

Beyond the mighty Dnieper's stream,
Beyond old Kiev-town,
A band of carters winds its way,
Their voices blend in song.
Returning from a pilgrimage,
Perhaps, a woman nears,
A matron young. But why so sad,
Why are her eyes in tears?
Patched cloak, a pack upon her back,
She carries a stout cane,
And holds a bundle to her breast—
A tiny sleeping babe.
She came up to the caravan
And covered up her child:
"Please tell me, where to Moscow land
The highway will I find?"

"To Muscovy? This is the way.
It's not too far, my dear?"
"To Moscow. And for Jesus' sake,
Please help me to get there!"
She trembled as she took the coin:
Oh, it was hard to take!...
Why should she beg? ... But there's
the boy—
Her child she can't forsake!...
She wept, then onward went. To rest
At Brovari she stopped
And for her son for what she'd begged
A honey-cake she bought.
A long time Katerina trudged,
And ever asked the way;
Full many nights beside a hedge
She and her infant lay....

What use are eyes so beautiful—it's clear:
Beside a hedge with bitter tears to weep!
So look, and mend your ways, oh maidens fair,
That you some day should not be forced to seek
Some Muscovite, as Katerina seeks....
Then do not ask why folks with anger speak
And do not let you in their house to sleep.
Oh maidens, do not ask them why—
The people do not know;
Whom God has punished in this life
They also rush to stone....
The people sway like willow shoots
Are swayed by vagrant winds.
The sun shines for the orphan too
(But does not warm, just shines)—
The people would the sun erase
And banish from the skies,
That orphans be denied its rays
To dry their streaming eyes,
If they but could. And yet, good God!
Why such a thorny lot?
What harm to people has she done?

What do the people want?
That she should suffer!... Oh my dear!
Don't, Katerina, let
The people ever see your tears,
Hold fast e'en unto death!
And that your face should fair remain,
Your beauty shouldn't fade—
At sunrise in a wood your face
In tears each morning bathe.
Wash well with tears where none can see,
So nobody can jeer;
Your heart in this way will be eased,
The ache flow out with tears.

Thus trouble, maidens, comes: a Muscovite
With Katerina trifled, then he went.
Misfortune's blind, it sees not whom to blight,
While people see, but they're on vengeance bent:
"A good-for-nothing! Let her die," they say,
"Since she to guard her virtue didn't know!"
Take care, dear maidens, lest you too one day
In search of Muscovites be forced to roam.
Where's Katerina now?
She slept beside the road,
Each morn at dawn she rose,
To Muscovy kept pressing on;
Then!... Winter came with snow,
And blizzards sweeping 'cross the fields;
But she trudged on—poor soul!—
With shoes of bast upon her feet,
And in a shabby cloak.
Thus doggedly she onward went;
When stop—what's that she sees?...
They're Muscovites, they're marching men....
Oh!... Katerina reeled....
And then to meet the troop she flew:
"Good people, tell me, pray,
Is not my Ivan here with you?"
"We know none such," said they,

Then, soldier fashion, jeered and laughed
At Katerina's plight,
"Oho, you women! Know our lads!
We fix the girls, all right!"
She looked at them with scornful eye:
"And yet you're men, you say!
There, there, my baby, don't you cry!
Let come whatever may,
I will not stop, I will go on....
Your father I will find,
I'll give you to him, darling son,
And I myself will die."

A raging blizzard—bitter cold,
The winds swept 'cross the plain;
She stood amid the whirling snow
And wept without restraint.
Tired out at last, the howling storm
Gave way to fitful sighs;
Our Katerina'd cry some more,
But her tears, too, ran dry.
She looked long at her sleeping son:
The wee face, washed with tears,
Was pink and looked as in the morn
A dew-wet rose appears.
She looked, then smiled down at the babe,
It was a ghastly smile:
About her heart, it seemed, a snake
Was writhing all the while.
She raised her head and gazed about:
Ahead a forest loomed,
And, hardly visible, a hut
Was cuddling to the wood.
"Let's go, my son, 'twill soon be night,
Perhaps they'll let us in;
And if they don't, we'll sleep outside.
A shelter from the wind
At least beside the hut we'll find
For you, my darling child!
Where will you spend your nights when I

No longer am alive?
Outdoors with dogs, my sorry mite,
Without a bed or roof!
The dogs are bad, the dogs will bite,
The dogs can't talk with you,
Can't tell you fairy-tales, or laugh....
With dogs you'll scrounge for food....
Oh, what misfortune's come to pass!
Whatever shall I do?"

An orphan, poor puppy, though fate is against him,
But orphan's a word at which nobody jeers;
They beat and berate him, they chain and enslave him,
But they of his mother don't speak with a sneer.
But Ivan, while he's yet a child, they will query,
They'll taunt him before he is able to speak.
Who huddles 'neath hedges in tatters and hungry?
At whom do the dogs all yap on the street?
Who guides the blind beggar? The bastard, poor creature....
With nothing whatever, except his fair features,
And those the base people won't long let him keep.

IV

Where yawns a gully deep and wide
At mountain foot, in quiet pride
Stand ancient oaks like grand-dads old.
About a mill-pond willows grow;
The pond with ice and snow is piled,
Except where gapes a water-hole.
The wintry sun with sullen glow,
A ruddy hoop, through clouds looks down,
The north wind takes a breath and blows—
All one then sees is whirling snow....
And hears the forest's mournful moan.

A snow-storm rages. Through the trees
The wild wind howls and groans;

The chalk-white fields like angry seas
Are billowed high with snow.
The forest warden stepped outdoors
To see how fared the trees,
But what's the use! in such a storm
What could a person see?
"Oh what a din! We'll have to let
The forest mind itself!
Back to the hut.... But wait—what's that?
Well, may they roast in hell!
It looks as though the devil's hosts
Are trotting down the road.
Nichipor, look! Those are not ghosts,
They're horsemen white with snow!"
"What Muscovites? Where Muscovites?"
"There, there, calm down, my dear!..."
"Where are the Muscovites, my friends?"
"See for yourself, out there!"
And Katerina flew outside
Just as she was from bed.
"That Moscow's sure got 'neath her hide!"
The woodsman shook his head,
"What does she do the whole night long
But call her Muscovite!"
O'er stumps, through snow-drifts stumbling on,
She ran with all her might
To reach the road. Then breathless stopped,
Stood barefoot in the snow.
The troop drew close, at jogging trot
They all on horses rode.
"Oh my poor fate!" She ran ahead
To meet them.... Then she spied
The captain riding at their head:
"My Ivan dear!" she cried,
"My lover, you have come at last!
Where were you all this while?"
She ran to him... his stirrup grasped...
He looked, then turned aside
And to his steed he gave the spur.

"My love, why do you flee?
Don't you know Katerina more?
Don't you remember me?
Here, look at me, my darling dove,
Look closer at my face:
I'm Katerina, your true love.
Why do you turn away?"
But he kept spurring on his steed
As though he did not see.
"Oh, wait a moment, darling, wait!
D'you see—I do not weep.
You do not recognise me, dear?
Oh Ivan, it is true—
I'm Katerina, don't you hear!"
"Let go, you silly fool!
Here, men, drag this mad wench away!"
"Oh God, what's this you do?
You cannot cast me off this way—
You promised to be true!"
"Take her away! Why do you wait?"
"Take who? Take me away?
What have I done to earn that fate?
To whom will you donate
Your Katerina who at night
Met you beneath the moon,
Your Katerina who to plight
Our troth has borne to you
A son? Oh Ivan dear, at least
Don't you reject me too!
I'll be your slave.... Love whom
you please,
I'll say no word to you....
Make love to all.... I will forget
I ever loved you true....
Bore you a son, became unwed
A mother 'cause of you....
An unwed mother.... What a shame!
Why am I thus undone!
Then leave, forget me, but I pray,
Do not forsake your son.

You will not leave him?... Oh my dear,
Don't haste away from me....
I'll bring your son to you out here."
She dropped the stirrup free,
Ran to the hut, then hastened back
To give the precious mite
To him, the father. Loosely wrapped,
It wailed from cold and fright.
"Here is your son, your bonny boy,
Come see! Where have you gone?
He's fled!... The father ran away!...
The father spurned his son!
Oh God!... My poor abandoned mite!
Whatever shall I do?
I beg you, gentle Muscovites,
Take him away with you!
Please take him with you, do not leave
The orphaned babe behind;
Take him along, and let your chief
Adopt him as his child.
Take him.... Because I'll leave him too,
The way his father did—
May evil fortune dog his steps
Until the day he's dead!
Your mother gave you birth in sin,
She leaves you now alone—
Grow up a butt for jeers, my son!"
She laid him on the road.
"Stay here to find your father, lad,
For I already tried...."
The little baby cried,
Abandoned in the snow.... The men,
Unmindful, passed it by.
It would have been as well; but then
The woodsmen heard its cry.

Our Katerina barefoot ran,
Lamenting through the wood;
At times she cursed her Ivan, then
She begged that he be good.

She left the wood behind, then saw
The mill-pond down below....
She dashed across the ice and stepped
Beside the water-hole.
"O God, accept my soul, I pray,
And you—my body take!"
A splash!... Then only bubbles
stayed
The water's calm to break.
Young Katerina found at last
What she'd been looking for!
The wind puffed once—and e'en
a trace
Of footsteps was no more.

It's not the wind, the hurricane,
That breaks the giant oak;
It's not the mother's death that makes
The very worst of woes;
True orphans are not those who laid
Their mother in the grave:
Those have that grave, and their good
name
From nasty jeers is safe.
Ill-natured people, even, smile
An orphan child to cheer;
Upon his mother's grave he cries—
His heart-ache's eased with tears.
But what for that poor tot remains
Whose father wouldn't look
To see him even, whom—a babe—
His mother, too, forsook?
What's harder than the bastard's lot?
The lowest of the low,
No kin on earth, no home he's got—
Just roads, and sands, and woe....
Patrician face with eyebrows dark....
What for? So he'd be known!
She didn't hide the father's mark....
Oh, would there had been none!

V

Beside the road to Kiev-town
A kobzar sat to rest.
With him his guide, a little boy
In rags and tatters dressed.
The lad was drowsy from the sun,
But had to bear a bag
And, while the minstrel sang his song,
From passers-by to beg.
Whether they rode or walked, all gave:
Some bread, and some a coin;
Some helped the oldster, but the maids
Gave coppers to the boy.
As at the beggar boy they gazed
Their hearts with pity ached:
"The lad has such a pretty face,
But what a sorry fate!"

Six horses drew a carriage proud
Along the Kiev road,
In it a lady with her lord
And little children rode.
In clouds of dust the coachman reined
There where the beggars sat.
The lad ran quickly, for the dame
Had beckoned with her hand.
She gave some money to the boy
And watched with smiling eyes.
The master glanced... then turned
away....
The monster recognised
To whom that boyish face belonged,
Those brows and those brown eyes....
The father recognised his son,
But coldly turned aside.
The lady asked the lad his name.
"Small Ivan, ma'am," he said.
"What a sweet child!" And then away
In dust the carriage sped....

The beggars counted what they'd got
In alms so far that day,
Turned to the sun to pray to God,
Then went their weary way.

St. Petersburg,
1838

Translated
by John Weir

HAIDAMAKI[6]

To Vassily Ivanovich Grigorovich[7]
in memory of April 22, 1838

All flows and all passes—this goes on forever....
Yet where does it vanish? And whence did it come?
The fool does not know, and the sage knows no better.
There's life... then there's death.... As here
blossoms a one,
Another there withers beyond a returning....
Its yellow leaves fall, to be green never more.
But still the bright sun will come up in the morning,
At nightfall the stars will come out as before
To swim in the heavens, and then, gentle sister,
You too, silver moon, will come out for a stroll,
You'll glance as you pass into puddles and cisterns,
And sparkle the oceans—you'll shine as of old
You shone over Babylon's fabulous gardens,
And as ages from now you will still be regarding
What haps to our children. Forever you'll glow!
I tell you my notions, my heart I unburden,
And sing you the muses inspired by yourself.
Oh, what shall I do with my onerous burden?
Advise me, for I am not just by myself,
I've children: what am I to do with my offspring?
To bury them with me? That would be a crime—
The soul is alive. Its ordeal may be softened
If someone will read these word-teardrops of mine,
The tears that were shed in the night, in
seclusion,
The tears that were poured from the heart in
profusion.

I'll not have them buried, for they are alive!
And as the blue sky overhead has no limit,
There's also no start and no end to the spirit.
And where does the soul stay? Those words are but
guile!!
May it on some heart here on earth leave an imprint—
Because it is hard unremembered to die.
Oh girls, to remember you first are obliged!
For it always loved you, my roses, sincerely,
And tenderly strove your sad lot to describe.
So rest ye in peace until daybreak, my children,
The while I consider who should be your guide.

My sons, my Haidamaki brave!
The world is free and wide!
Go forth, my sons, and make your way—
Perhaps you'll fortune find.
My sons, my simple-minded brood,
When you go forth to roam,
Who will receive my orphans poor
With warmth into his home?
So fly, my fledgling falcons, fly
To far Ukraine, my lads—
At least, if there you hardship find,
'Twon't be in foreign lands.
Good-hearted folks will rally 'round
And they won't let you die;
While here.... Well, here... it's hard,
my sons!
If you're allowed inside
The house, it's only to be jeered—
You see, they are so wise,
So literate and so well-read,
The sun they even chide:
"It does not rise the proper way,
Nor shine the way it should;
Now, here's the way it should be
done...."
So what is one to do?
You must pay heed, perhaps indeed,

The sun's not rising right,
The way they read it should in books....
Oh, they are brainy, quite!
About you, then, what will they say?
I know what fate is yours!
They will poke fun and laugh their fill,
Then throw you out of doors.
"Let them stay there," they'll say, "until
Their father will get wise
And in our language tell his tale,
His hetmans old describe.
The fool, instead, is holding forth
In language obsolete,
And a Yarema in bast shoes
Brings out for us to see.
The fool! He hasn't learned a thing
Though he was soundly caned.
Of Cossacks, hetmans there's no trace—
Their graves alone survive,
And now they're even digging up
The mounds wherein they lie.
And he wants us to listen to
What the old minstrels say.
Your labour's lost, sir: if you aim
To make yourself a mint
Of money, and a lot of fame,
Then of Matryosha sing,
And of Parasha, charming witch,
Parquet, gold braid and spurs.
Then you'll make good!! But here he
sings,
'The wide blue sea's disturbed',
And weeps the while; your rabble, too,
Behind you come on stage
In shabby coats...." My thanks to you
For your advice so sage!
The coat is warm, but I'm afraid
It's not cut to my size,
And your advice, perhaps, is wise,
But it is lined with lies.

Excuse me, please!... Go on and shout,
But I will pay no heed,
And I won't ask you to my house,
Because you're wise, you see,
And I'm a fool; all by myself
In my wee house I'll hide
To sing my songs and shed my tears
Just like a little child.
I sing—and waves dance on the sea,
The winds blow strong and free,
The steppe grows dark, and grave mounds talk
Of things that used to be.
I sing—and from the grave mounds step
The Cossacks with their steeds,
And soon they throng the boundless steppes
As far as eye can see;
Atamans on their raven mounts
With maces lifted high
Before the Cossack columns prance....
Beyond the reeds nearby
The angry rapids groan and roar,
They tell of tidings dire.
I listen and my heart is sore.
Of oldsters I inquire:
My fathers, tell me why you mourn?
"No cause is there for cheer!
The Dnieper's angry with us, son,
Ukraine is all in tears...."
And I weep too; then they come forth,
A glorious parade,
Atamans, sotniks,[8] men of worth,
And hetmans, all arrayed
In gold; into my humble home
I welcome them, and they
Get seated and to me unfold
The story of Ukraine.
How long ago the Sich was built,
The fortress of the isle,
How Cossacks in their stout canoes

Once crossed the rapids wild,
How sailed upon the open sea
And how Skutari[9] burned,
From fires in Poland lit their pipes
And to Ukraine returned
Their daring deeds to celebrate,
To feast and to carouse.
"Innkeeper, pour! Play, minstrel,
play!"
The Cossacks blithely shout.
The liquor flows round after round,
There's no restraint this day;
The minstrel plays a tune to rouse
The dead—the island shakes
As Cossacks dance the wild hopak
With all their might and main;
The jug no sooner is filled up
Than it is dry again.
"Make merry, coatless gentlemen,
As free as wind at play!
Let's have more music, more to drink,
Make merry while we may!"
Both youth and oldsters join the dance,
Their feet like lightning fly.
"Ah, that's the way! Go to it, sons!
You'll make good bye-and-bye!"
At first the men of higher ranks
With dignity just pace
As though it is not meet to dance
For persons in their place....
Then their feet too begin to prance
Despite their weighty years.
I watched the dashing Cossack dance
And laugh through brimming tears.
I look on with laughter, my eyes overbrimming....
I'm lonely no longer, I've friends at my side!
In my modest dwelling the Cossacks make merry,
The rushes are rustling, the steppe stretches wide;
In my little cottage the blue sea is sounding,
A poplar-tree whispers, a grave mound complains,

A maiden sings softly of love in the springtime—
I'm lonely no longer, I've plenty of friends!
That's where my gold, my wealth I find,
That's where my glory lies!
As for your counsel—you're too kind!
Thanks for your false advice.
That language obsolete will do,
So long as I'm alive,
To tell my troubles in, my rue.
So I bid you good-bye!
I'll go to see my children off,
They must be on their way.
Perhaps somewhere they'll come across
A Cossack old and grey,
Who'll open up his arms to them,
Greet them with trembling tears.
And as for me, I say I am
A peer above all peers!

Thus, seated at the table's end,
I think: Whom should I ask?
Who will agree to guide my sons?
The new day dawns at last;
The moon retires, the sun is red.
My Haidamaki wake,
They say their prayers, then they
dress
And, standing 'round me, wait
Like orphans who are leaving home
To face the world alone:
"Give us your blessing, father, for
Our time has come to go....
So wish that fortune we may find
As o'er the earth we roam."
But wait.... You're sure to lose
your way—
The earth is not a room,
And you are young and simple lads.
Who'll show you where to go?
Who'll guide you? Who will walk ahead?

My sons, I'm worried so!
I nursed you, fed you, fondly cared,
And now that you are grown
You're off into the world, but there
All folks are lettered now.
Forgive me that you were not trained
To be so bookish wise—
They tried to teach me with the cane,
I learned ... but otherwise!
I know the alphabet, of course,
But not the things they prize.
What will they think of you, my sons?
Come, let us find your guide!
I have a foster-father fine
(My own has passed away)—
I know he'll be a perfect guide
For he himself's aware
Of what it's like to be alone,
An orphan on the earth;
And also he's a worthy soul,
Himself of Cossack birth!...
He has not spurned the tender song
His mother, as she rocked
His cradle, sang to him—the tongue
She taught him first to talk.
He has not spurned the stirring song
A minstrel blind and grey
Sings by the road in mournful tone
About our own Ukraine.
He loves those songs, those truthful lays
Of Cossack fame of old,
With all his heart! So let us make
Our way to his abode.
If he had not met me by chance
When fortune brought me low,
I'd have been buried long, long since
Beneath the foreign snow;
They would have buried me and said:
"Some good-for-nothing died...."

Oh, it is difficult indeed
To suffer, not know why.
That's past and gone, so let it be!...
Let's go to him, my lads!
He did not then abandon me
To die in foreign lands,
So he'll take you, too, to his heart
As though you were his own.
And then, a prayer, and you start—
Off to Ukraine you go!

Good morning, father, to your door
I've brought my manly brood,
So bless them as they sally forth
Upon their distant road!

St. Petersburg,
April 7, 1841

INTRODUCTION

The nobles once ruled Poland's roost,
A very haughty lot;
With Muscovites they measured swords,
The Turk and Tatar fought,
And Germans too.... Yes, once 'twas so....
But all things pass away.
The high-born braggarts used to strut,
And drink both night and day,
And with their kings play ducks and
drakes....
Not with Sobieski Jan,
Nor yet Batory: those two were
Not of the common run—
But with the rest. And they, poor souls,
In fear and trembling ruled.
The conclaves, big and little, fumed,
And Poland's neighbours viewed
A spectacle—how Polish kings

The Polish kindom fled,
And listened how the noble mob
The sejms brought to an end.
"*Nie pozwalam! Nie pozwalam!*" [10]
The haughty nobles roared,
While the big magnates stoked up fires
And tempered well their swords.
This lasted for a lengthy time
Until to Warsaw-town
The lively Poniatowski [11] came
To occupy the throne
And undertook to some degree
The noble breed to squelch....
He failed! He wanted what was best,
Or maybe something else.
Only their veto—that one phrase
To take from them he sought.
And then.... All Poland burst in flames,
The gentry ran amok....
"The king's a villain, scoundrel vile,
A Moscow tool!" they cry.
At Pac's appeal, Pulawski's call
The Polish nobles rise.
A hundred leagues—Confederates— [12]
All Poland they inflamed,
Lithuania they overran,
Moldavia, Ukraine;
They scattered wide and they forgot
That freedom was their aim—
They joined with Jews [13] in compact foul
To rob and devastate.
They ran mad riot through the land,
They churches set ablaze....
The Haidamaki then began
To sanctify their blades.

THE RED BANQUET

Throughout Ukraine the clang of bells
Proclaims the day of doom;
The Haidamaki fiercely, yell:
"The gentry's end has come!
The gentry's finished! We shall set
A fire to sear the sky!"
The very clouds are painted red—
The province is on fire.
Medvedivka's the first to burn
And heat the clouds above.
Smila is next, the country 'round
Well-nigh aflood with blood.
Korsun and Kaniv are ablaze,
Cherkassy, Chigirin;
Along the Highway spread the flames
As far as the Volyn,
And blood flows freely. Gonta's[14] made
Polissya his domain,
While near Smila bold Zaliznyak[15]
Tests his Damascus blade—
In old Cherkassy, where his dirk
That has been sanctified,
Yarema, too, tries out. "Good work!
The mad dogs all must die!
Good work, my lads!" so Zaliznyak
Shouts in the market-place
Which now's a hell; and through that hell
The Haidamaki race.
Yarema—a blood-curdling sight—
In battle-frenzy fells
Three-four at once. "Good work, my boy!
Their souls be damned to hell!
Kill, kill! You'll either win high rank,
Or go to paradise!
Now, children, ferret out the rats!"
The rebels in a trice
Spread out to cellars, attics, nooks

To search for hiding foes;
They killed them all, all goods they took.
"Now you may stop, my boys!
You've tired yourselves, now rest a bit."
The market squares and lanes,
With corpses strewn, are flowing red.
"More vengeance yet we claim!
Go over them a second time
To make sure, doubly sure,
That the vile dogs will never rise,
And never plague us more!"
The Haidamaki after that
Assemble in the square.
Yarema on the outskirts stands.
"Come closer, don't be scared,"
Shouts Zaliznyak. "I'm not afraid!"
With cap in hand he comes
Up to the chief. "Where from, my lad?"
"Vilshana is my home."
"Vilshana? Where the villains slew
The warden of the church?"
"What's that? They slew?"
"His daughter, too,
According to reports,
They carried off. You knew them well?"
"They took some girl away?"
"The warden's daughter, so they tell."
"Oksana!" Just the name
Yarema whispered and he fell
Unconscious where he stood.
"Oho! So that's what.... The poor lad!
Mikola, bring him to!"
Mikola brought him to. He cried:
"A hundred hands I need,
A blade in each, to extirpate
The Polish gentry breed!
Revenge, such terrible revenge
'Twill put hell in the shade!"
"Well said, my lad, to keep that pledge
There'll be no lack of blades.

Come with us to Lisyanka now,
We'll temper there our steel!"
"Oh father, quickly let us go!
I'll follow where you lead,
I'll follow to the ends of earth
I'll go to hell below
To tear her from the devils, sir!
To the earth's end I'd go....
But I'll not find her anywhere,
I'll never see her more!"
"Perhaps you will. Don't give up hope.
Now tell us what's your name?"
"Yarema."
"And your surname, boy?"
"I have none!"
"No surname?
Were you a bastard? In the lists,
Mikola, put him down
As ... let us find a name that fits—
How does Hasnothing sound?
Let's name him that!
"No, that's not it!"
"Is Hardluck better, friend?"
"No, that won't do."
"Here, wait a bit,
Halaida,[16] that's the name!"
They wrote it down.
"Halaida, lad,
Now we'll go out to play
You'll find good fortune ... maybe,
bad....
Well, boys, let's on our way!"
From extra horses in the camp
They gave one to the lad.
He laughed as on his horse he leapt,
And then again was sad.
Outside the city gates they rode;
Cherkassy was in flames....
"All here, my sons?"
"Yes, every one!"

"Let's go then!"
Like a chain
Along the Dnieper's wooded banks
The Cossack column winds.
Behind them on a little nag
The minstrel Volokh rides,
And as from side to side he sways,
He sings a new-born lay:
"Oh, Zaliznyak his Cossacks brave
Leads for an outing gay!"

Cherkassy's left behind, the flames
Still leaping to the cloud.
No one looks back. Nobody cares!
They only laugh aloud
And curse the gentry vile. Some talk,
Some listen to the song
The minstrel sings. While Zaliznyak
Rides at the head alone,
With glowing pipe, his ears alert
To any night surprise;
Yarema, too, without a word
Behind his leader rides.
The green groves and the darker woods,
The Dnieper and the hills,
The sky, the stars, the people, goods,
And his o'erwhelming ills—
All disappeared, all are no more!
He nothing knows or sees—
Just like a corpse. His heart is sore
And yet he does not weep.
He does not weep: the vicious snake
That's coiled within his breast
Drinks up his tears, his heart that
aches
It tears to tiny shreds.
Oh, soothing tears! Oh, healing tears!
You wash away all woes;
Wash mine away.... I cannot bear
This ache that's in my soul!

Not all the water in the sea
Or in the Dnieper wide
Can calm my heart and drown my grief;
Is nought but suicide
Then left for me? Oksana, dear!
Oksana, oh my own!
Where have they taken you? I fear....
Perhaps the beasts have thrown
Her in a dungeon where in chains
She lies awaiting death,
The gentry cursing and her fate
With her last, dying breath.
Perhaps Yarema she recalls,
Vilshana, and her home,
Perhaps in thought to him she calls:
"Yarema, darling, come,
Take your Oksana in your arms!
Thus we'll together sleep
Forever. Let them work their harm—
We'll be beyond their reach, we'll be!..."
The wind blows from beyond Liman
And bends the poplar low—
A maiden also may be bent
Beneath misfortune's blows.
She'll grieve awhile, but time will
pass
And all may be forgot....
Maybe... a lady, richly dressed,
She with some Pole.... O God!
The worst of tortures ever planned
In hell for sinful souls
I'll suffer, but I could not stand
That final fiendish blow:
"My heart would break though it were
stone
If ever that came true!
Oksana, darling! Oh, my own!
Where have they taken you?
Where are you held, where are you hid?"
Then tears began to flow

In torrents like a summer rain
Or like a springtime flood.
Then came the dawn. Zaliznyak reined
His horse beside a wood:
"Here's where we turn off from the road
And turn our horses free!"
The Cossacks rode into the grove
And soon were hid by trees.

HUPALIVSHCHINA

The rising sun found all Ukraine
In ashes or in flames,
Just here and there behind locked doors
The gentry trembling waits.
Each village has its gallows-trees
With corpses thickly hung—
Just of the bigwigs, smaller fry
Are piled in heaps like dung.
At cross-roads and along the streets
The dogs and ravens feed
On human flesh and pecked-out eyes;
And no one pays them heed.
There's no one left, only the dogs
And groups of children roam—
The women, too, took oven-prongs,
And Haidamaki joined.

Such evil 'twas that then engulfed
The whole of the Ukraine!
'Twas worse than hell.... And yet, what
for?
For what were people slain?
They're so alike, one father's sons—
They should as brothers be.
But no, they could or else would not,
They had to disagree!
Blood had to flow, fraternal blood,
For one's with envy filled

Because his brother's bin is full,
His fields give handsome yield!
"Let's kill our brother! Burn his home!"
No sooner said than done.
And all was over! But not quite,
For there were orphan sons.
They grew in tears—but they grew up;
Their toil-worn hands they freed
And turned to vengeance—blood for blood
And hurt for hurt their creed!
The heart is sore when you reflect
That sons of Slavs like beasts
Got drunk with blood. Who was to blame?
The Jesuits, the priests!

The Haidamaki through ravines
And forests made their way,
Halaida riding in their midst,
His heart in constant pain.
Voronivka, Verbivka, too,
Already are behind,
And here's Vilshana. "What to do?
Shall I stop and inquire
About Oksana? Better not,
So no one knows my woe."
The Haidamaki meanwhile trot
Along the village road
Without a halt. Halaida hailed
One of the little lads:
"Is't true the warden here was slain?"
"Why no, my father says
The Polish lords burned him to death—
The ones that lie out there.
Oksana, too, was carried off,
My father says, somewhere.
The funeral...." He did not wait,
But gave his horse the spur.
"Why did I not die yesterday
Before I ever heard!
If I should die today, I know

I'd rise up from the grave
To take revenge upon the Poles.
Oksana! Where did they
Take you, my own?"
He bowed his head
And let his horse walk free.
Oh, it is hard for a poor lad
To hold in check his grief.
He catches up. The place they pass
Where inn and stables stood—
There's nothing now but smoking ash,
And Leiba is gone, too.
Yarema smiled—a mirthless grin
That fearful was to view.
Two days ago here he had been
A slavey to the Jew,
And now.... His heart began to pine
For those bad days of old.
The rebel band passed the ravine
And turned off from the road.
They came upon a stripling lad—
A patched coat on his back,
His shoes were bast, he also packed
Upon his back a sack.
"Hey, wait a minute, beggar boy!"
"I am no beggar, sir,
The Haidamaki I have joined!"
"A sight you are, for sure!"
"From where, young scarecrow, do you
hail?"
"From Kerelivka way."
"Do you know Budishch and the lake?"
"Of course I know the place—
Go down that gully, it will lead
You straight to Budishch lake."
"Are any gentry to be seen?"
"There's not a one today,
Though yesterday were quite a few.
We couldn't bless our wreaths—
The Poles would not allow us to.

That's why we killed the beasts!
My dad and I used blesséd blades,
While mother's sick in bed,
Or else she too...."
"Fine, that's the way!
Here's something for you, friend,
A ducat, which you must not lose."
He took the golden coin,
Inspected it, then said, "Thank you!"
"Well, let's get going, boys!
But don't make any noise, d'ye hear?
Halaida, follow me!
Beside this lake in the ravine
There is a clump of trees
In which a Polish treasure's found.
When we come to the wood
We will surround it without sound
In case some Poles still should
Be left on guard."
When they arrived,
They stood about the wood
And looked—but saw no sign of life....
"Oho, the devil's brood
Is here all right! What pears I see
Up there among the leaves!
They must be ripe! Just shake the trees!"
Like rotten pears, indeed,
The Poles came tumbling to the ground
To meet the penal blade.
The Cossacks scoured till all were found
And not one live remained,
Then found where treasure chests were hid
And took away the gold,
Ransacked the pockets of the dead,
And on their mission rode
on to Lisyanka.

GONTA IN UMAN

As to Uman they made their way,
The Haidamaki bragged:
Their silks and satins we will take
To make ourselves foot-rags!

The days go by, the summer wanes,
And the Ukraine is still ablaze;
In hamlets hungry children wail—
Their parents gone. The yellow leaves
Of autumn rustle in the trees;
The clouds roll by; the sun is glazed;
No sound is heard of human speech;
In villages the beasts that feed
On human corpses howl. The Poles
Were left unburied, food for wolves,
Until the heavy winter snows
Concealed their bones....
The raging snow-storms did not stop
The vengeance worse than hell:
The Poles froze, while beside the fires
The Cossacks warmed themselves.
Spring came and woke the sleepy earth
From its deep winter sleep:
With primroses it was adorned
And periwinkles sweet;
The larks in fields and nightingales
In groves each morning sing
Their sweetest songs in joyful praise
Of earth adorned by spring....
A heaven truly! And for whom?
For people. Yes, but they?
They do not even want to look,
Or that it's poor, they say.
They want it tinted up with blood
And brightened with a blaze;
The sun and blooms aren't bright enough,
And clouds cast too much shade.
What they mean is: too little hell!
Oh people! Will you e'er

Be satisfied with what you have?
Oh, people, you are queer!

To blood and human savagery
Spring did not bring a halt.
It's terrible.... Yet 'twas the same
In ancient Troy, recall,
And will be in the future, too.
The Haidamaki rode—
And where they went the earth was
scorched
And washed with human blood.
Maxim acquired a worthy son,
Renowned throughout Ukraine;
Yarema, though adopted, is
His true son just the same.
While Zaliznyak is well content
To smile the Poles and slay,
Yarema rages—he would spend
In carnage night and day.
He shows no mercy, does not spare
Or miss a single Pole—
For the churchwarden's death he
makes
Them pay a hundredfold,
And for Oksana.... At the thought
Of her his heart grows faint.
"Go to it, son!" cries Zaliznyak,
"We'll dance until our fate
Wills otherwise!"
And so they did:
Along the entire way
From Kiev to Uman the dead
In heaping piles were laid.
The Haidamaki on Uman
Like heavy clouds converge
At midnight. Ere the night is done
The whole town is submerged.
The Haidamaki take the town
With shouts: "The Poles shall pay!"

Dragoons are downed, their bodies roll
Around the market-place;
The ill, the cripples, children too,
All die, no one is spared.
Wild cries and screams. 'Mid streams of
blood
Stands Gonta on the square
With Zaliznyak together, they
Urge on the rebel band:
"Good work, stout lads! There, that's the
way
To punish them, the damned!"
And then the rebels brought to him
A Jesuit, a monk,
With two young boys. "Look, Gonta, look!
These youngsters are your sons!
They're Catholics: since you kill all,
Can you leave them alone?
Why are you waiting? Kill them now,
Before your sons are grown,
For if you don't, when they grow up
They'll find you and they'll kill...."
"Cut the cur's throat! As for the pups,
I'll finish them myself.
Let the assembly be convened.
Confess—you're Catholics!"
"We're Catholics.... Our mother made...."
"Be silent! Close your lips!
Oh God! I know!" The Cossacks stood
Assembled in the square.
"My sons are Catholics.... I vowed
No Catholic to spare.
Esteemed assembly!... That there should
Be no doubt anywhere,
No talk that I don't keep my word,
Or that I spare my own....
My sons, my sons! Why are you small?
My sons, why aren't you grown?
Why aren't you with us killing Poles?"
"We will, we'll kill them, dad!"

"You never will! You never will!
Your mother's soul be damned,
That thrice-accursed Catholic,
The bitch that gave you birth!
She should have drowned you ere you saw
The light of day on earth!
As Catholics you'd not have died—
The sin would smaller be;
Such woe, my sons, today is mine
As cannot be conceived!
My children, kiss me, for not I
Am killing you today—
It is my oath!"
He flashed his knife
And the two lads were slain.[17]
They fell to earth, still bubbling words:
"O dad! We are not Poles!
We ... we...." And then they spoke no more,
Their bodies growing cold.
"Perhaps they should be buried, what?"
"No need! They're Catholic.
My sons! Why did you not grow up?
My sons, why weren't you big?
Why did you not war 'gainst the foes
With me as Cossacks brave?
Your mother, Catholic accursed,
Oh why did you not slay?...
Let's go, my brother!"
With Maxim
Across the square he treads;
They cry together: "Punish them
Till every Pole is dead!"
And awesome was their punishment....
Uman went up in flames.
No house, no church, but had been searched,
And not a Pole remained—
They all were dead. Such carnage cruel
As at Uman that day
Had ne'er been seen. St. Basil's school,
Where Gonta's sons had stayed,

Was razed down to the very ground
By Gonta, raging wild.
"'Twas you that ruined my little sons!"
With every blow he cried,
"You swallowed them when they were small,
You taught them evil lore
And not the good!... Tear down the walls!"
The Haidamaki tore
The walls to pieces. 'Gainst the stones
They bashed the heads of priests,
And the young pupils still alive
They threw in cisterns deep.
Until late at night they slaughtered the Poles;
Not one was let live. Yet Gonta still raved:
"Oh monsters, come out! Crawl out from your holes!
My sons you've destroyed—oh, cruel's my fate!
I've nobody now! For nothing to wait!
My sons, whom I loved, so handsome and good,
You're gone from me now. I'm thirsty for blood!
I want in the blood of the gentry to wade,
To drink it, and watch how it flows and turns
black....
Oh winds, as ye blow, why waft ye not back
Some Poles for our blades?... Oh cruel's my fate!
And yet I can't weep! Ye stars in the sky,
Please leave me alone and hide behind clouds.
I murdered my sons!... My heart is wrung dry!
Where will I find peace?..." So Gonta cried loud;
And then in the square big tables were laid
Amid the debris, 'mid corpses and blood,
And loaded with looted liqueurs and fine food—
The rebels sat down. It was their last raid,
Their last supper too!
"Make merry, my brood!
We'll drink while we may, and fight while we may!"
Old Zaliznyak cried. "We'll frolic, my lads!
Fast music, minstrel! Let earth really shake
Tonight in Uman when my Cossacks dance!"
And the minstrel played:

"My father's an innkeeper,
Shoemaker too;
My mother is a spinner,
Matchmaker too;
My brothers are brave fellows
They roam the woods,
A cow found in the forest,
Rich necklace too,
And I'm Khristya, a maiden
With beads so fine,
My needlework is made in
A leaf design.
With red boots my feet adorning,
I go milking in the morning—
I water the cow, I do,
And milk her too,
With the lads I stop to spoon,
I stop to spoon."

"Heigh-ho! Supper's o'er,
Hey, children, lock the door,
Old woman, don't you fret,
Sidle up to me, my pet!"

The Cossacks dance. But one is gone....
Why does not Gonta dance?
Why joins he not in merry song,
Nor drinks he with the lads?
He is not there; his heart won't let
Him sing and dance and joke.
But who is he who silent flits
In black loose-hanging cloak
About the square? See, there he stops
And 'mong the dead he digs
As though he's searching. Then he stoops,
Two little bodies picks
And lifts them gently on his back
And carries them away
Behind the blazing church, where black
He fades into the shades

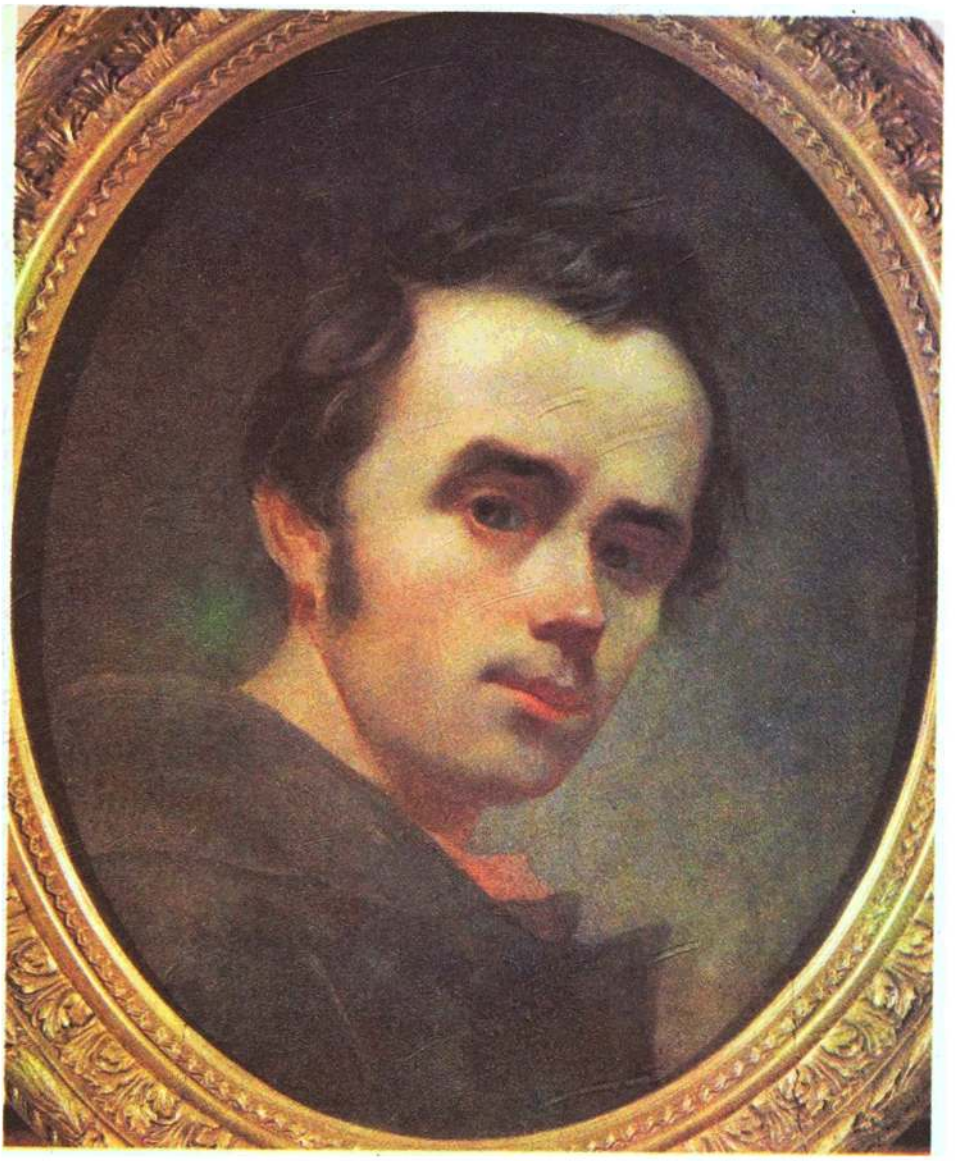
Of summer night. Who can that be?
It's Gonta, and his load—
His sons—he bears some place where he
Can cover them with sod,
So that the youthful Cossack flesh
Should not be food for dogs.
Down darker lanes, where fires are less,
And smoke serves as a fog
To screen him from all prying eyes,
The Cossack bends his steps,
So none should see how Gonta cries
Or where his children rest.
Out in a field, far from the road,
He lays them; takes his knife
And with the bless'd blade digs a hole.
Uman supplies the light
So he can see the work he does
And the two lads who lie
As though asleep still in their clothes....
Why do they fear inspire?
Why is it Gonta seems to hide
As though he were a thief?
Why does he shake? From time to time
The wind bears to the chief
The sounds of Cossack revelry;
He does not heed the noise—
A fine deep house amid the fields
He's building for his boys.
It's done at last. He lays his sons
Into their home, the hole,
His ears still ringing with the sound:
"Oh dad, we are not Poles!"
Then Gonta from his pocket takes
A crimson silken cloth,
The dead eyes kisses, then he makes
The sign of sacred cross,
And covers the young Cossack heads.
Then lifts the cloth again,
To gaze once more upon his dead....
The tears then gush like rain:

"My children! Open up your eyes,
Look at Ukraine, my boys:
For her, my sons, you gave your lives
And I, too, am destroyed.
Who will there be to bury me?
In some far foreign field
Who will there be to weep o'er me?
My fate is black indeed!
The most unfortunate of men,
I'm left alone, in pain!
Why was I granted children, then?
Or why was I not slain?
They would have laid me in the earth—
I bury them instead."
Again he kissed them, made the cross,
The cloth drew o'er their heads,
And earth he then began to pile:
"Rest in your hole, my sons,
Your mother, bitch, did not provide
Fine beds to lie upon,
Without corn-flower wreaths and rue,
My sons, you'll have to sleep.
Please pray to God, I beg of you,
That he should punish me
Yet on this earth for what I did,
For this most awful crime.
Forgive me, sons! You I forgive
That Catholics you died."
He levelled off the earth and laid
Green sod upon the grave,
So none could tell where Gonta made
His sons' last resting place.
"Sleep well, my lads, and wait for me,
I will not tarry long.
My knife cut short your span of life,
The same will be my lot.
They'll kill me, too.... May it be soon!
But who will bury me?
The Haidamaki! Just once more
I'll join them on a spree! ..."

So Gonta went; his shoulders sagged,
He tripped as though were blind.
The burning city lit his path;
He raised his eyes and smiled—
A smile most awful to behold.
He looked back on the field,
And wiped his eyes.... And then by smoke
The Cossack was concealed.

EPILOGUE

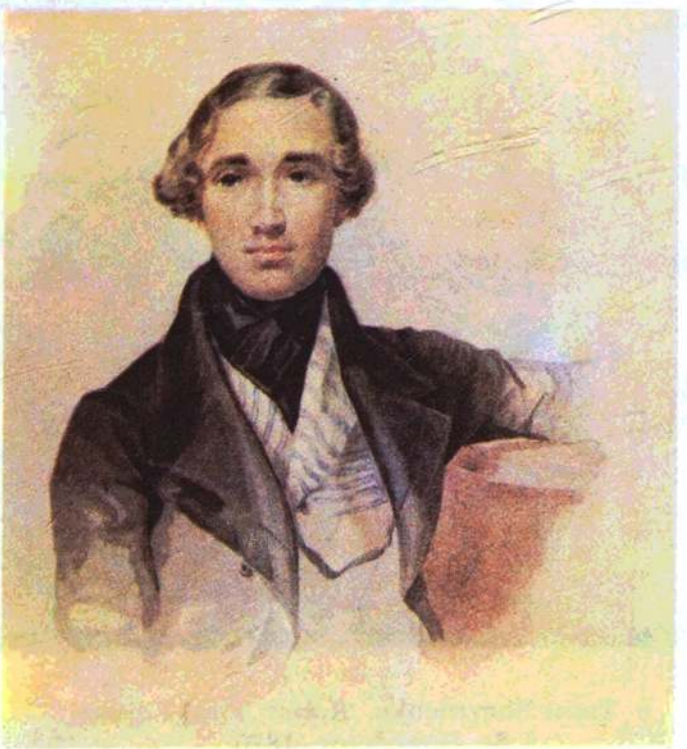
Much time has gone by, since a child, a poor orphan,
In sacking and coatless, without any bread,
I roamed that Ukraine where Zaliznyak and Gonta
With sanctified sabres had wreaked vengeance dread.
Much time has gone by since, along those same highways
Where rode Haidamaki, exhausted and sore
I tramped through the country, its high roads and byways,
And weeping, sought people to teach me good lore.
As now I recall them, my youthful misfortunes,
I grieve that they're past! I would trade present fortune
If only those days could be brought back again.
Those evils, the steppes that seem stretching forever,
My father and grandfather old I remember....
My father is gone, but my grand-dad remains.
On Sundays, on closing the book about martyrs
And drinking a glass with the neighbours, my father
Would beg of my grand-dad to tell us the story
Of the Haidamaki revolt long ago,
How Gonta, Zaliznyak once punishment gory
Inflicted on Poles. And the ancient eyes glowed
Like stars in the night as the old man related
How gentry folk perished and how Smila burned....
The neighbours from horror and pity near fainted.
And I, a wee fellow, the churchwarden mourned,
Yet, nobody noticed, all gripped by the horror,
The child that was weeping alone in the corner.



Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Oil, 1840

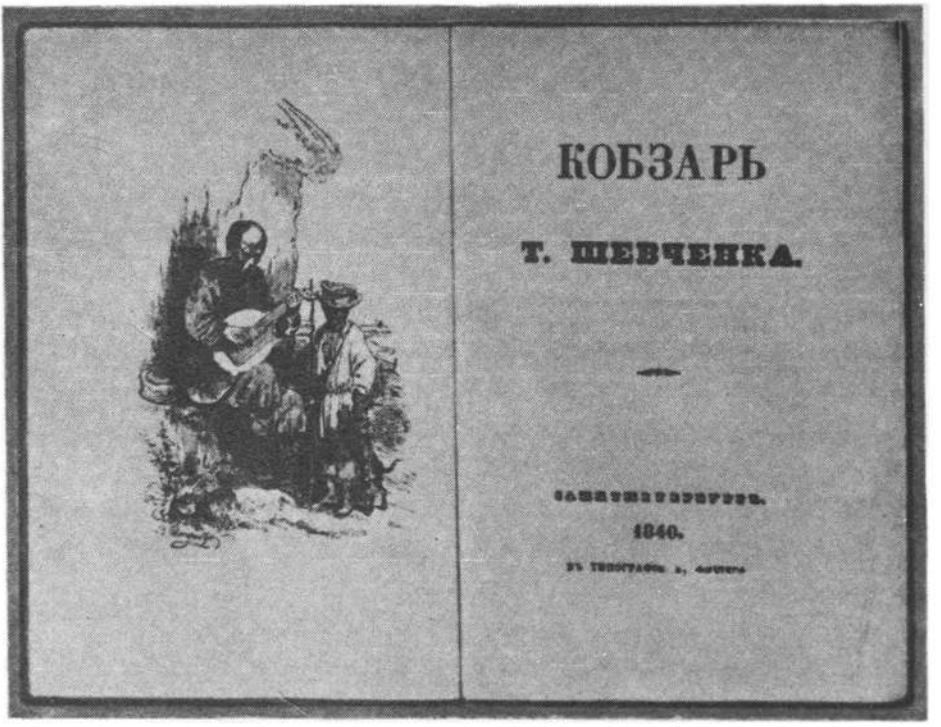
Taras Shevchenko. "A Gipsy Fortune-Teller". Water-colour. 1841

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of A. E. Kotzebue, a well-known battle painter. Water-colour. 1843

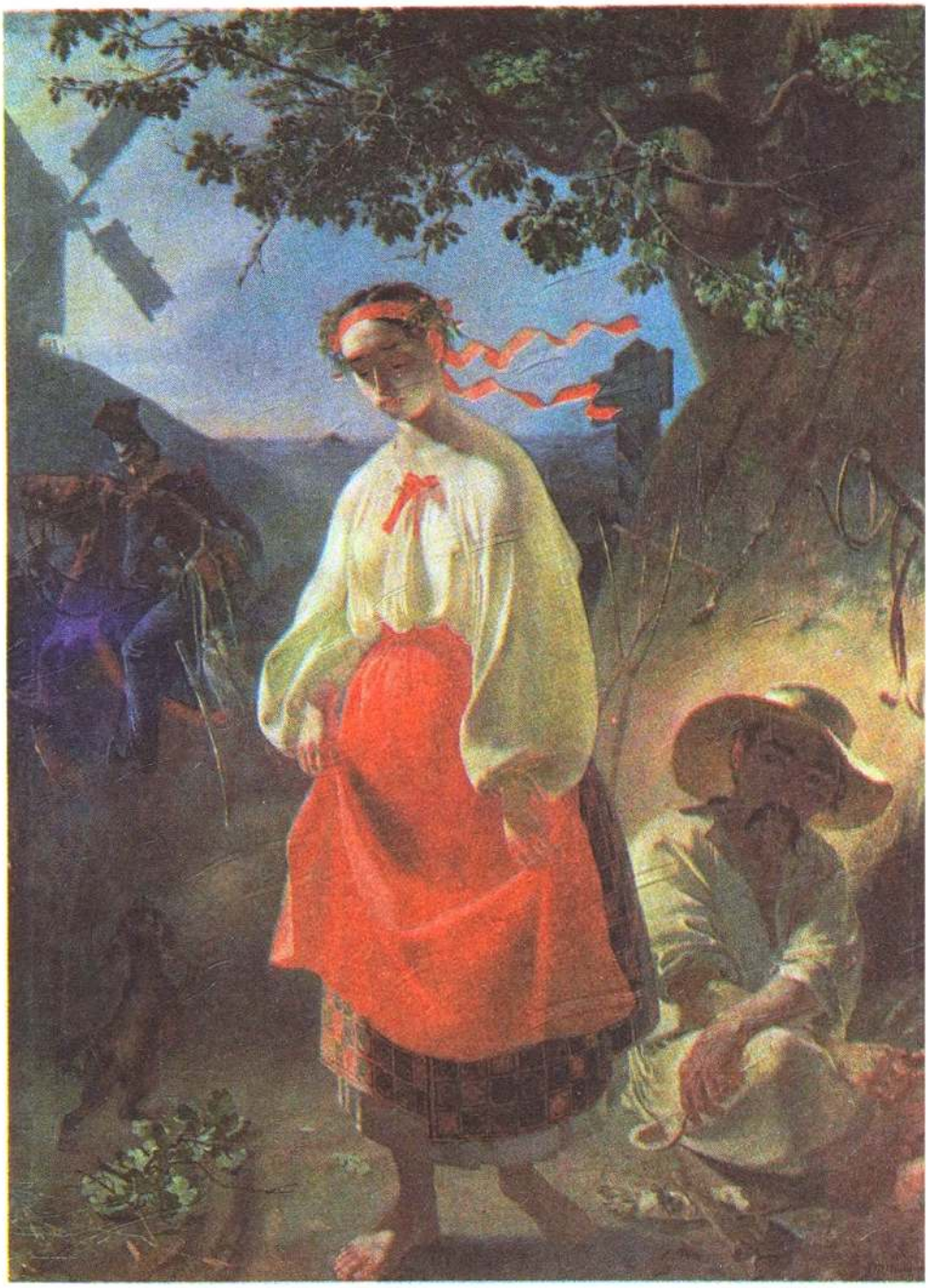


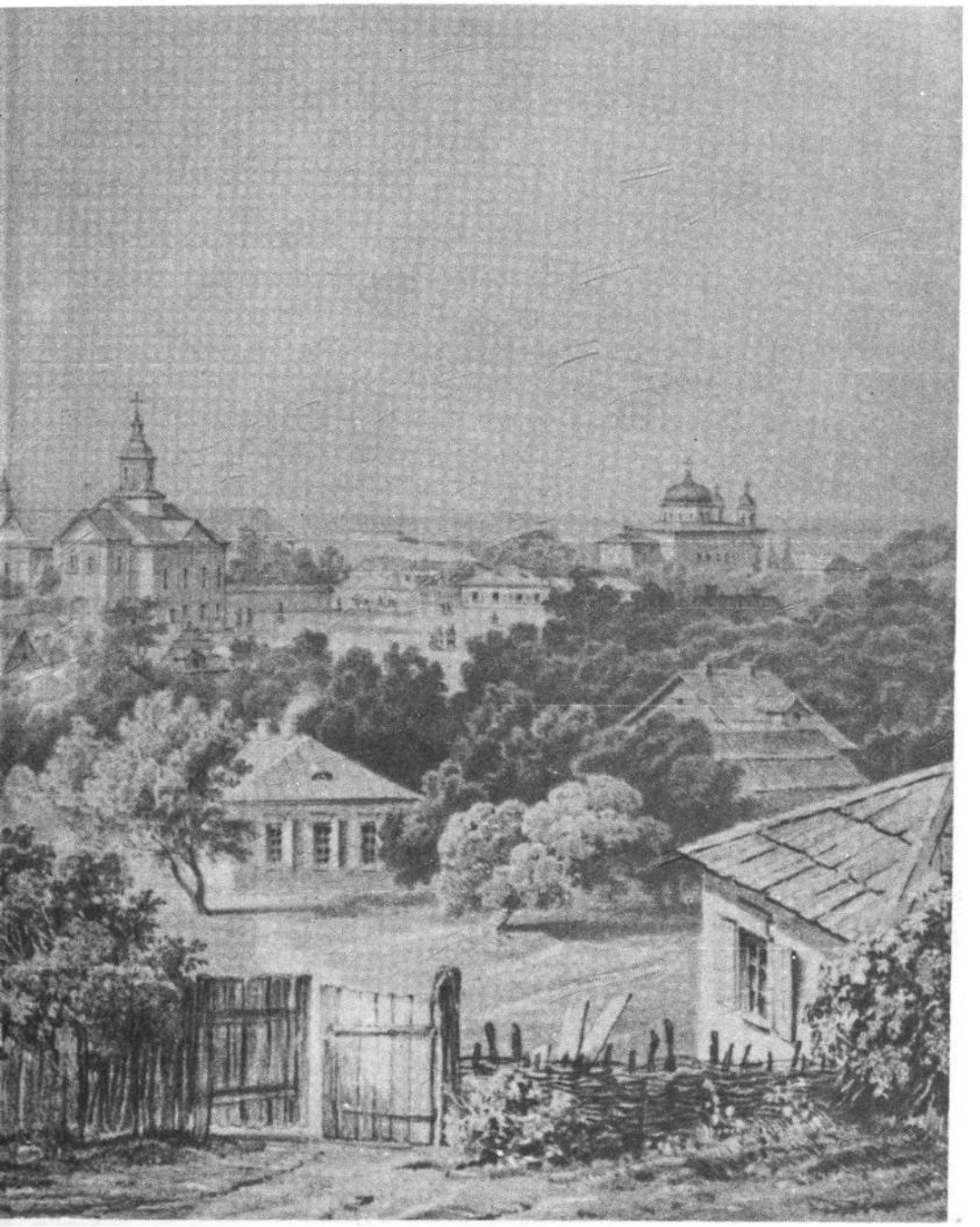
Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of A. I. Lagoda. Water-colour. 1849

Portrait of G. F. Kvitko-
Osnovyanenko. Artist unknown. Oil



Taras Shevchenko. *Kobzar*. First Edition.
St. Petersburg, 1840

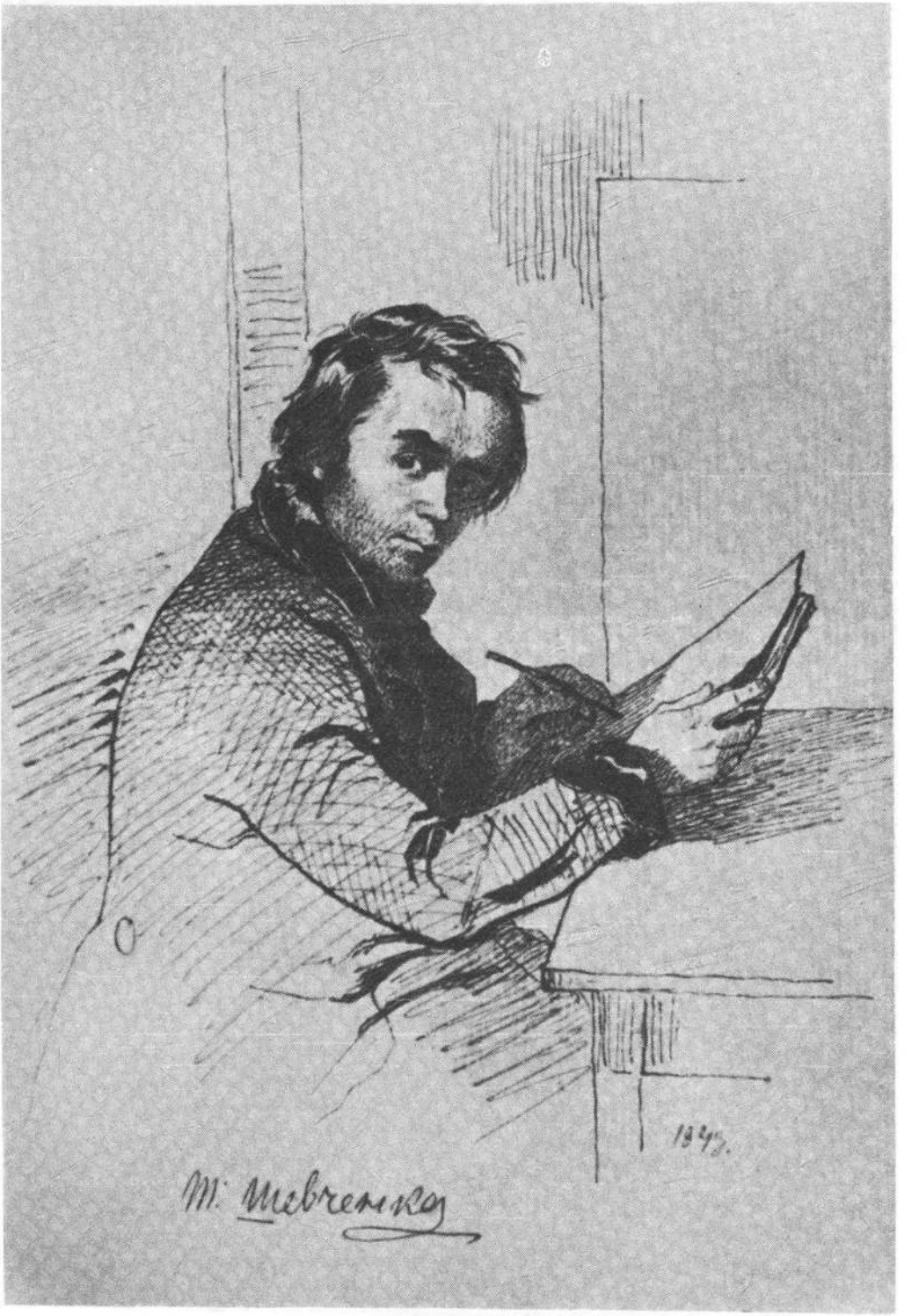




Old Kiev. Engraving made from M. Sashin's drawing. Middle of the 19th century

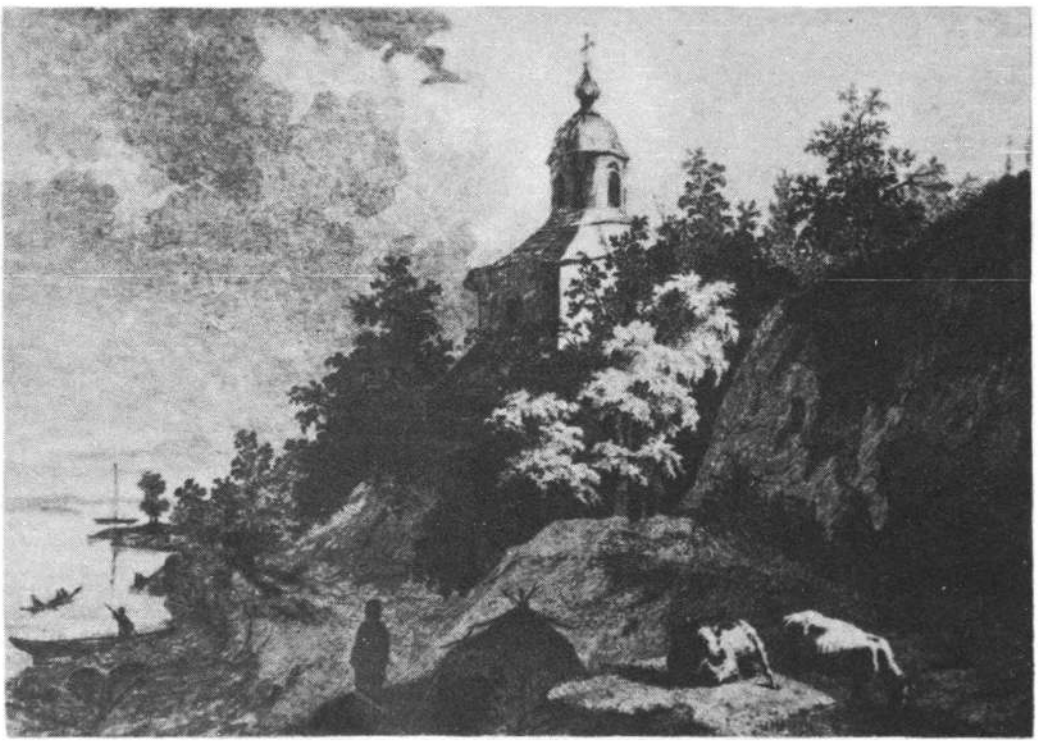
Taras Shevchenko. "A Peasant Family". Oil. 1843

Taras Shevchenko. "A Widow's Cottage in Ukraine". Pencil. 1843

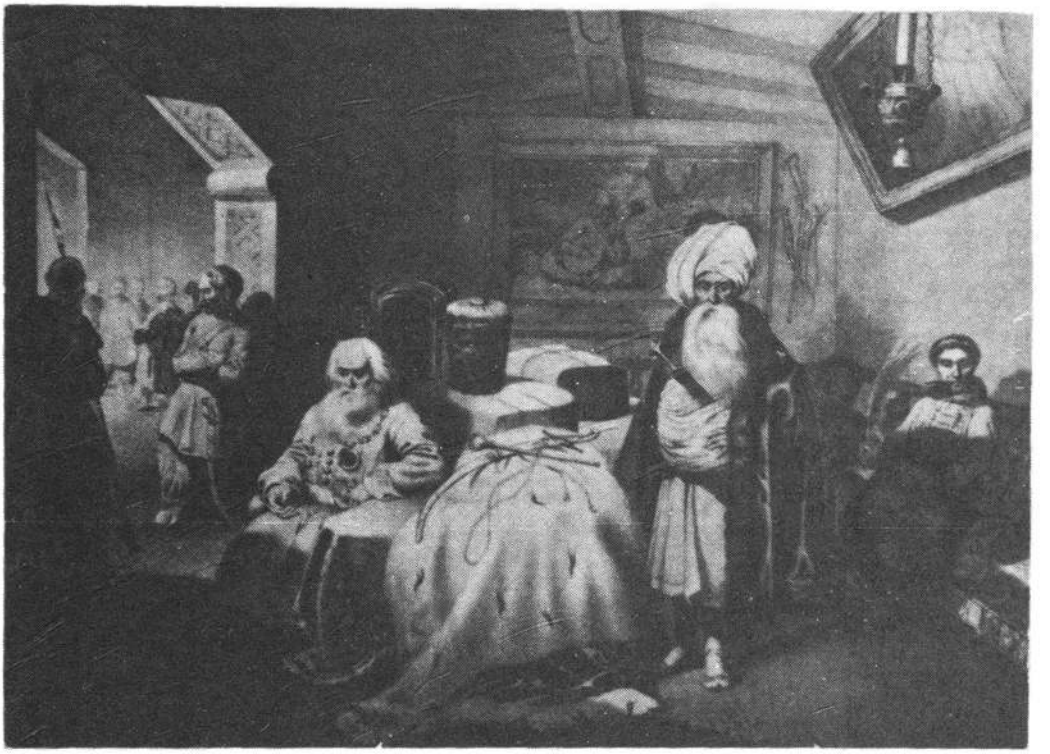


Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Pen and india ink. 1843

Taras Shevchenko. "Village Council". Etching. 1844

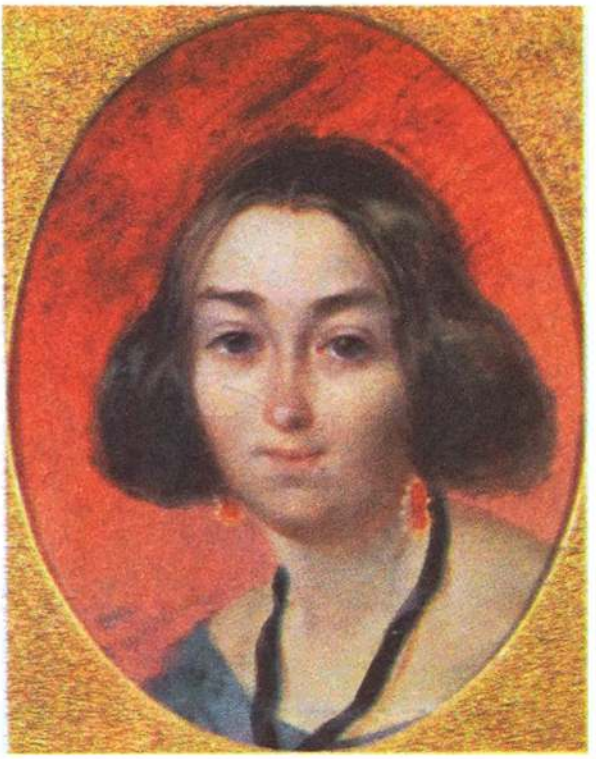


Taras Shevchenko. "Vidubetsky Monastery". Etching. 1844



Taras Shevchenko. "Gifts in Chigirin". Pen and india ink. 1844

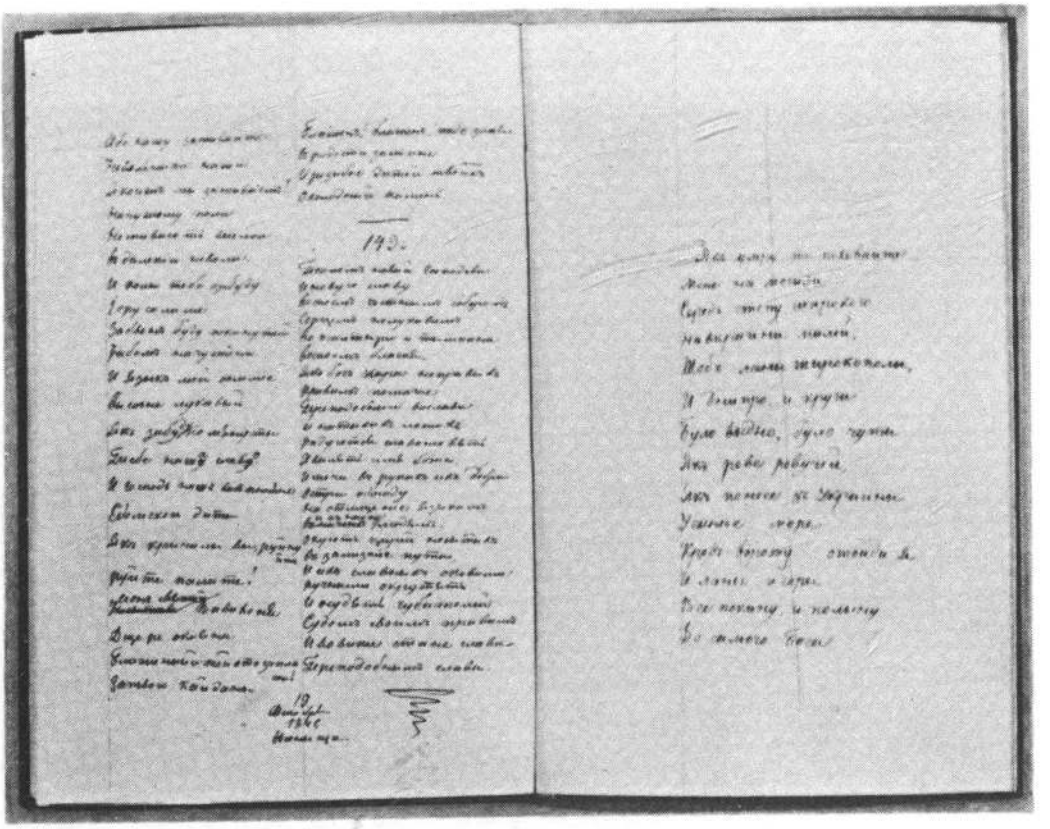
The artist's certificate No. 1257 awarded to Taras Shevchenko by the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg on December 10, 1845



Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of
G. I. Zakrevskaya. Oil. 1843

Glafira Psyol. Portrait of V. N. Repnina.
Oil. 1843

Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Pencil. 1845

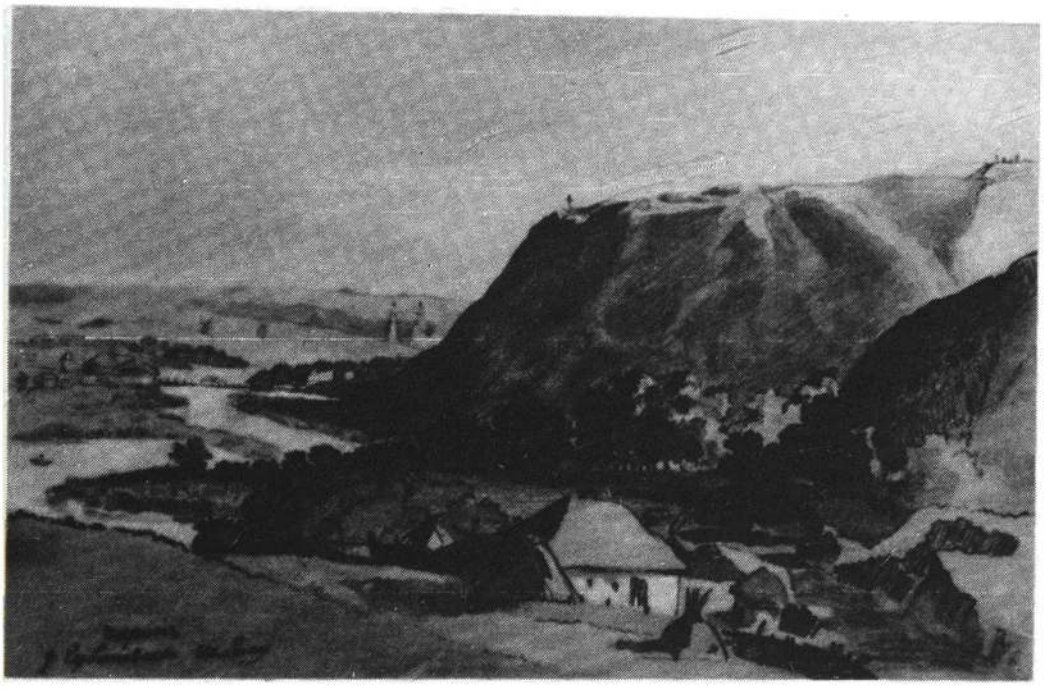


Taras Shevchenko's manuscript of *Testament* (first part) 1845, and of the poem *Psalms of David* (ending) 1845, from the hand-written collection *Three Years*

Taras Shevchenko. "The House of I. P. Kotlyarevsky in Poltava with a Church for Background". Water-colour. 1845

Taras Shevchenko. "Andrushi". Sepia. 1845

Taras Shevchenko. "The Church of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin in Pereyaslav". Water-colour. 1845



Taras Shevchenko. "A View of Chigirin from the Subbotovskaya Road" Water-colour. 1845

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of Y. V. Keikuatova. Oil. 1847

Taras Shevchenko. "The Pochayev Monastery from the South". Water-colour. 1846

I thank you, my grand-dad, 'twas you that preserved
The story I've told of the old Cossack glory:
And by the grandchildren it now will be heard.

I beg your pardon, readers dear,
That artlessly I spin
This yarn of bygone Cossack feats,
Without the bookish skill.
I'm just repeating grand-dad's tale—
Good health to him!—and he
Ne'er dreaméd that there would come a day
When learned folk would read
His narrative. Now don't be hurt,
Old grand-dad—let them rant.
And in the meantime I'll return
To my small rebel band,
And when I've led them to the end,
I'll rest—and then again,
At least in dreams, my eyes shall look
Upon that fair Ukraine
Where once the Haidamaki roved
And awful vengeance wreaked,
Whose roads I measured years ago
With blistered naked feet.

The Haidamaki had a spree,
Made merry unrestrained:
With gentry's blood almost a year
They watered the Ukraine,
Then were no more—their dented blades
Were put away to rust
And Gonta's gone: no cross or grave
To mark his place of rest.
O'er all the steppe the wild winds swept
The Cossack dust away,
No one was left to mourn his death
Or for his soul to pray.
A foster-brother yet remained
Alive upon the earth;
But when he learned the fiendish fate

The devils had reserved
For Gonta, how his brother died—
For the first time in life
Old Zaliznyak began to cry.
He did not wipe his eyes,
But pined away, and soon was dead;
He died in foreign parts,
In foreign earth his bones were laid:
So hapless was his lot!
Their iron chief with deepest grief
The Haidamaki bore
To bury in a foreign field;
They built a mound, and mourned
Awhile, then brushed their tears away
And went back whence they came.

Yarema, leaning on his staff,
Long stood beside the grave,
"Rest, father, in this foreign place,
For in our native land
No longer is there any space,
Nor freedom to be had....
Sleep soundly, honest Cossack soul!
You won't forgotten be."

Across the steppe Yarema went,
His tears still flowing free,
And he kept always looking back,
Till he was lost to sight.
Then just the grave mound in the steppe
Was dark against the sky.

By Haidamaki with good seed
Ukraine had then been sown,
The harvest, though, they did not reap.
So what is to be done?
The seeds of justice did not sprout;
Instead, injustice grew....
The Haidamaki all dispersed,
Each chose what he would do:

Some just went home, but others took
To forests with their blades
To prey on merchants. This repute
To our own days remains.[18]
The ancient Cossack fortress, Sich,
Then later was laid waste:
Some Cossacks 'cross the Danube fled,
Some to Kuban escaped;
That's all that's left—except the plaint
The Dnieper rapids howl:
"They finished off our sons, and aim
To pulverise us now!"
But people, passing by, don't heed
The rapids' angry roar;
And the Ukraine is fast asleep,
Asleep for evermore.

Since those grim years the grain grows
green
And lush across Ukraine;
No screams are heard, no carnage seen;
The winds blow 'cross the plains,
They bend the willows in the wood
And grasses on the lea.
Now silence reigns. That is what God
Has willed. So let it be.

But sometime, when the day is done,
And all is warm with spring,
Old Haidamaki walk along
The Dnieper's banks and sing:

"Our good Halaida's house has floors.
Let the sea surge! Let the sea swell!
Halaida, all will yet be well!"

St. Petersburg,
1841

Translated
by John Weir

HAMALIYA[19]

"Oh, the winds are mute, the tides do not carry
Good tidings to us from Ukraine!
Do the Cossacks meet, the Turk plan to harry?
For news we are waiting in vain.
Blow, ye north wind, blow across the blue water
From Luh,[20] from the fields of Ukraine,
Dry our bitter tears and drown our chains' clatter,
And ease the poor prisoners' pain.
Roll, oh roll, ye sea, as hither you're bearing
The bold Cossacks' boats from Ukraine,
When they sail to save their unhappy brethren
Who languish in Turkey in chains.
Even, O God, if they come not to free us,
Still send them across from Ukraine;
Word of their exploits will reach us in prison
And light our last days with their fame."

'Twas thus in Skutari that Cossacks were singing,
Unfortunate captives, their tears running free,
The tears of the Cossacks, their woe overbrimming.
The Bosphorus shook, for it never before
Had heard Cossacks weeping; the grey bull in anguish
The hide on his back 'gan to shake with a roar
And sent the blue waves down his ribs with the message
Of Cossack misfortune full-speed to the sea.
The sea heard the tidings which Bosphorus bellowed
And passed the sore plaint on to Liman, which trembled
And told it in ripples to Dnieper's deep stream.

With foam upon his hoary whiskers,
Our might grand-dad thunder-roared:
"Hey, brother Luh, Khortitsya sister!
D'ye hear? What are you waiting for!"
"We hear, we hear!" they promptly answered.
The Dnieper soon with boats was thronged,
And Cossack voices rose in song:

"Ho, the Turk's across the water
Where the surf is pounding.
Hey, hey! Pound, ye waves,
Wear the rocks all away!
Visitors are coming.

*

"Ho, the Turk has roomy pockets
Full of gold and silver.
Not for pelf do we sail,
But the foe to assail,
Brethren to deliver.

*

"Ho, the Turkish janissaries,
Pasha, too, are snoring.
Ha, ho! Tremble, foe!
We'll not temper the blow!
Liberty and glory!"

So, singing free, they set asea;
Oh the sea's unruly.
In the lead boat Hamaliya
Steers his vessel truly.
Hamaliya, the heart falters:
The sea's gone a-rocker!
They don't take fright!—Soon they're hidden
By the surging water.

In luxury pillowed, Byzantium[21] drowses
At ease in his harem, Skutar's at his side.

The Bosphorus clamours, intent on arousing
The Turk from his slumber, to thwart the surprise.
The sea roared in fury: "I swear that I'll bury
You, Bosphorus Strait, beneath mountains of sand
Unless you are silent!... D'ye see whom I'm bearing
To visit the sultan?... Be still, I command!"
The Bosphorus quaked at the sea's angry thunder
(The sea loved those resolute, long-whiskered Slavs)
And stopped its commotion. And so the Turks
slumbered.
At ease in his harem the sultan relaxed.
Only in Skutari the captives weren't sleeping
In their dreadful dungeon. For what do they wait?
God's help in their trouble they are beseeching,
While waves on the outside keep pounding away.

"Do not permit, God of Ukraine,
That freedom-loving Cossacks perish
In foreign prisons, clad in chains!
A blot today, 'twill be black shame
If we, who liberty so cherish,
Will rise up from a foreign grave
On that, the final Judgement Day,
And face the hosts in shameful shackles...."
Then from behind the walls a cry
Rang through the night, "On, on to battle!
The Moslem pagans smite and slay!"
Oh, the very blood is blazing.
Skutari goes crazy.
"Kill them! Slay them!" Hamaliya
The fortress is razing.
The cannon of Skutari thundered,
And yet the Turks could not survive
The daring of the Cossack drive—
The janissary guards went under.
Hamaliya through Skutari—
Through Hades—is racing;
First into the prison breaking,
He knocks off the bracelets.
"Fly free, birds of falcon feather,

Join the merry-making!"
The grey falcons aroused themselves,
For long had they waited
To hear good Christian speech again.
The night, too, awakened;
Dear old mother, she had never
Seen how Cossacks settle
Accounts with foes. Have no terror,
Watch the Cossack revel.
Why should Cossacks feast in darkness
At a celebration!—
They're not robbers that in the night
They should eat raw bacon
Without a fire. "Let us have light!"
Soon the clouds were scorching—
Skutari burned and the galleys
Were turned into torches.
Byzantium at last awoke
And beheld the slaughter,
Gnashing his teeth, to the rescue
He swam 'cross the water.

Byzantium in frenzy rages
And clutches madly at the shore,
Takes hold, rears up—then laved with gore,
Sinks down beneath the Cossack sabres.
Like hell-fire all Skutari blazes;
The Bosphorus is filled with blood
Which gushes from the market-places.
Like blackbirds flitting through a wood
The Cossacks comb the raging Hades
To see that none escape the sword!
Fire holds no terror for this brood.
They raze the fortress; then they carry
The gold and silver in their caps
Back to their boats. And now the task
Is done. There is no need to tarry.

The lads assembled at the shore.
Their pipes with burning brands they started,

Boarded their boats, took to the oars—
The crimson waves before them parted.
More like coming from an outing
Than from war returning,
With rousing songs, Cossack fashion
'Cross the sea they journey:

"Our ataman Hamaliya
Is a chieftain daring,
His good crew he took acruising
Asea for an airing;
Asea for an airing,
Fame and fortune sharing,
Freeing brothers from the prison
Where they were despairing.
To Skutari Hamaliya
Boldly went afaring.
There our Cossack lads in irons
Sat for death preparing.
'Brothers!' called out Hamaliya,
The lads liberating,
'Life awaits you, celebrating,
Turks exterminating,
Our Cossack camps with tapestries
And silks decorating!'
Swiftly came the Cossacks flying
The harvest to gather;
Stoutly reaping, corpses heaping,
They sang all together:
'Glory to you, Hamaliya,
O'er Ukraine's wide spaces,
O'er Ukraine's wide spaces
Your name will be cherished
That you didn't let the Cossacks
In slavery perish!'"

So sail the Cossacks home with song;
Behind, the doughty Hamaliya
Keeps watch—the eagle guards his young;

From Dardanelles the wind blows freely,
Yet not a sign of Turk flotilla;
The Turk's afraid the Monk[22] again
May build a bonfire at Galata,
Or that a new Pidkova[23] wrathful
Will call to battle on the main.
Soon the morning sun, arising,
Crimson tints the dancing waves;
Stretching out to the horizon
Friendly seas embrace the brave.
Hamaliya, feel the breezes....
Our home seas are pounding!...
Then the Cossack boats are hidden
By billows like mountains.

St. Petersburg,
1842

Translated
by John Weir

SORROWFUL NIGHTS

In the night her brown eyes
The maid she wept dry.

Maryana the Nun

Her plait came undone,
To her waist did it reach;
Her breast heaved and rose
Like a wave of the sea;
Her dark eyes they shone
Bright as stars in the night;
Her arms she held out
For to clasp her love tight—
But they touched the cold sheet
And drew back, limp with fear;
Down they dropped, drained of strength,
And were washed by her tears.

"I don't need a plait so thick
Or a waist so slender,
I don't need these eyes of mine
When no kind and tender
Heart my own poor heart's distress
Echoes or its gladness....
O my heart, my lonely heart,
What is there but sadness
In your every beat!... Come, speak,
Cunning world and crafty,
What's the good of fame?... 'Tis not
Fame that I am after.

Love, a life lived for the heart,
Not the empty fame of
Beauty such as mine—'tis this

That I crave!... The baneful
Voice of envy calls me proud,
Aye, and heartless also.
Little do the spiteful know,
They accuse me falsely.
Little do they know what lies
In my heart, what feelings
It conceals.... O righteous God,
Let the dawn, the healing
Dawn, descend, and night recede—
For the dark night's shadows
Stifle me.... When daylight comes
To the fields and meadows
Talk I do, and so my pain
Banish...." And her hollow
Sobs rang through the room as she,
Weeping, clutched her pillow.

St. Petersburg,
May 18, 1844

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

A DREAM[24]

A COMEDY

> "Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."
>
> *John, Chapter 14, Verse 17*

Each man on earth has his own fate,
Each one his highway wide:
This one builds up, that one lays waste,
And that casts greedy eyes
O'er all the globe, to find somewhere
A land not yet enslaved,
Which he could conquer and then bear
With him into the grave.
This fellow in his neighbour's home
His host cleans out at cards,
While that one in a corner hones
A blade for brother's heart.
Then there's the sober citizen,
The worthy, pious kind,
Who'll creep up like a cat and then
Bide patiently his time
Until with hardship you're beset,
And then he'll pounce!—Don't plead:
The tears your wife and children shed
Won't save you from his teeth.
And that one, generous and grand,
A fervent patriot,
So deeply loves his native land,
So worries o'er its lot,
As from his country's heart he sucks
The blood as though 'twas water!...
The brethren meanwhile sit and look,
Their eyes agape like saucers!

And bleat like lambs: "Perhaps it was
Ordained thus from on high."
That's how 'twas meant to be! Because
There's no God in the sky!
You pull your yoke until your breath
Gives out and you are done,
Yet pray for heaven after death?
In vain! There's none! There's none!
Your labour's lost. Come to! Come to!
In this world everyone—
The princes, and the beggar, too,—
They all are Adam's sons.
Both he... and he.... What's this I prate?
What is it all about?
I banquet every single day,
Carouse day in, day out,
While you with envy burn and hate!
Don't scold: 'Twill do no good—
I'm deaf to you! I drink my own,
And not the people's blood!

Such thoughts went flitting through my head
As tipsy from a merry feast
In dead of night, on reeling feet,
I made my way to home and bed.
No bawling child or nagging spouse
Have I to spoil my rest—
With perfect peace I'm blest
Both in my mind and in my house.
I climbed into my bed
And soon slept like the dead.
And when a man has had a few,
Though cannon roar he still will snore,
Whatever you may do.
Oh, what a vision rare I saw
In sleep that night;
A staunch abstainer would get tight,
A tightwad would a coin bestow,
If they could only get a glance

At what I saw.
But not a chance!
I dreamed: high in the air's expanse
It seemed an owl was flying fast
Over meadows, over valleys,
Over river banks and gulleys,
Over woods and over steppes.

And in its wake I flew as well
And bid the earth below farewell:
"Farewell, O world, farewell, O earth,
Unfriendly land, good-bye!
My tortures cruel, my searing pain
Above the clouds I'll hide.
And as for you, my dear Ukraine,
I'll leave the clouds and sky
To fall with dew and talk with you,
Poor widow-country mine.
I'll come at midnight when the dew
Falls heavy on the fields;
And softly, sadly we will talk
Of what the future yields.
Until the rising of the sun
We'll talk about your woes,
Until your infant sons are grown
And rise against the foes.
Good-bye, my lovely, poor Ukraine,
O widow-land of mine!
Your children rear unto the day
For justice is divine!"

We fly .... I look—the dawn
arrives,
The sky's edge bursts ablaze;
In shady glades the nightingales
Sing out the new sun's praise.
The breezes softly, lightly wake
The steppelands from their dreams;
In the lush valleys, by the lakes
The willows shimmer green.

The orchards, heavy laden, bow;
The poplars stand at ease
Like sentinels when all is well,
And gossip with the fields.
And all about, the whole land gleams
With nature's warmest hues,
Bedecked with blossoms, dressed in greens,
And bathed in drops of dew.
Since time began it bathes in dew
And greets the morning sun....
There's no beginning to all this,
Of ending, too, there's none!
There s no one who could either gild
Or blotch this beauty-land....
And all of this.... My aching heart,
My soul, why are you sad?
My poor, my desolated soul,
Why do you vainly weep?
Whom is it you pity? Alas, can't you see?
And cannot you hear how the multitudes cry?
So go, take a good look! And meantime I'll fly
Into the blue sky, above the grey clouds;
Where there are no rulers, no prisons or knouts,
No jeers of contempt and no people's lament.
Go, closer look: in that same Eden which you flee,
His tattered shirt from a poor cripple's back they tear
With skin and all—because his hide they need
To shoe their princelings with. And over there
A widow's crucified for taxes, while they drive
Her only son—her only hope!—in chains
Into the army. And there—more dead than live,
A starving babe beside a hedge awaits
Its mother from the feudal lord's estate.
And there, d'you see? My eyes! My eyes!
While I was yet a child
Why did you not along with tears
Flow out and leave me blind?
An unwed mother with her babe
Is shuffling down the lane—
Her parents drove her from the house,

And none will take her in!
E'en beggars chase her from their midst!
Young master pays no mind:
He's had some twenty maidens since,
To while away the time!

Does God look from behind a cloud
And see our woes and ills?
Perhaps He does, but helps as much
As do these ancient hills
Which mute and motionless endure
While washed with human gore!
My soul! My miserable soul!
I cannot suffer more.
We shall drink down a poison draught
And sink into the snow,
And send a thought right up to God
And ask if He will tell:
Will hangmen still much longer rule,
And turn earth into hell?
Then leave me, my thoughts, my torment, my pain,
And take away with you all evils, all woes—
Your constant companions! Together you've grown
And clung to each other; by woe were you trained
From earliest childhood. So take them and fly,
Unleash angry riot all over the sky.
Let it turn black, let it turn red,
Let conflagration spread,
Let once again the dragon's breath
Pile mound on mound of dead.
And meanwhile, I will hide my heart
And go far, far away
And find somewhere a blesséd place,
Where Eden still holds sway.

Again above the earth I fly.
Again I tell the earth good-bye.

It's hard to leave your mother dear,
No roof above her head,
But harder yet to watch her tears,
Her rags, her lack of bread.

I fly, I fly, the north winds blow;
Before lie endless leagues of snow,
Of swamps and woods, a fog-bound land,
A wilderness untouched by man.
Here not a sound, not e'en a track
Is seen of fearful human feet.
To foe and friend alike I speak:
Farewell! I'm never coming back!
Carouse, make merry all you like!
I'll never hear you now
All by myself I'll sink to sleep
Forever in the snow.
And till the day comes when you find
There is a corner yet
That's not been drenched in blood and tears
I'll take a little rest....
I'll rest a bit.... What's this I hear?
The clanging sound of chains
Beneath the earth.... I'll take a look....
Oh, evil human race!
Where have you come from? And what for?
What is it that you seek
Beneath the earth? No! I'm afraid
There'll be no rest for me
In heaven too!... What have I done?
In what am I to blame?
To whom and how have I done wrong?
Whose heavy hands have chained
My soul within this searing breast
And set my heart on fire?
And who let loose these clam'ring crows—
These carping thoughts of mine?
Why do I suffer? I don't know
Why I'm tormented so!
Oh, when will I my sins atone

And pay the debt I owe?
When will this dreadful nightmare end?—
I neither see nor know!

Then suddenly the wasteland shook.
As though their coffins they forsook
On that, the final Judgement Day,
The dead arise to justice claim.
No, these are not the dead at all,
And not to judgement claim!
They're people, living mortal men
In heavy irons chained.
Deep from the bowels of the earth
The gold they daily bring
To fill his hollow coffers with!...
They're convicts!... Why in chains?
Go ask the tsar.... And even he,
Perhaps, cannot explain.
See, there a branded bandit drags
His ball and chain behind;
And there, fresh from the torture rack,
His teeth an outlaw grinds—
To kill his barely-breathing pal
Is topmost in his mind!
And there, amid those wretched dregs,
In iron chains he stands:
The king of freedom![25] World-wide king,
Crowned with a convict's brand!
In prison dread he does not groan,
He does not quail or weep!
A heart that once with good was warmed
Will warm forever keep!

Oh, where are the thoughts you so lovingly nurtured,
Your beautiful blossoms, those dreams of the
future—
To whom did you pass them, my friend, oh to
whom?
Or will they lie buried with you in the tomb?
Don't bury them, brother! Scatter them surely!

They'll sprout and they'll grow, and will soon
be maturing!
Enough? Or must I undergo
Still more? Enough, the brain
Is wakened by the cold.

Again I fly. The land turns dark.
My mind is drowsing, faint my heart.
Big towns I see as I look down,
A hundred churches in each town,
I see their squares and streets are filled
With soldiers busy at their drills;
Supplied with boots and clothes and food,
And given heavy chains to boot,
They're training.... But what's that ahead?
A swampy, boggy lowland spreads,
And in that slough a city[26] stands;
A heavy cloud above it hangs,
A cloud of fog.... Up close I fly—
It's of enormous size.
Perhaps in Turkey,
Or in Germany,
Or, maybe, even in Muscovy:
Churches, places galore,
With plenty of pot-bellied lords,
And not a solitary home!
The night was falling....
Bonfires flared....
With torchlights, on all sides
The throngs pressed so that I was scared!...
"Hurrah! Hurrah!" they cried.
"Come to your senses, you poor fools!
What do you celebrate?
Why all the fuss?" "What a *Khokhol*![27]
Can't see it's a parade!
His Majesty himself has deigned
This day to promenade!"
"So where's that marvel to be seen?"
"There—through the palace gate."
I pushed my way; a countryman

With buttons made of brass[28]
Elected to acknowledge me:
"Where are you from?" he asked.
"I'm from Ukraine." "How comes it that
You do not even know
To talk the way they do up here?"
I answered, "That's not so—
I know, but do not choose to." "Queer!
Well, I'm in service here,
I know the ins and outs, and so
I'll lead you, if you care,
Into the palace. But, you know,
We're educated folk
So don't be stingy with the tip...."
Oh loathsome scribbler, go
Away from me.... I made myself
Invisible again
And to the chambers made my way.
Oh, God, what I saw then!
Now there was heaven! In those halls
The very cuspidors
Are gold-encrusted! Scowling, tall,
Here comes himself, the tsar,
To stretch his legs; and at his side
His empress struts and preens,
All wrinkled like a dried-up prune
And like a beanpole lean,
While every time she steps, her head
Goes jiggling on her neck.
Is this the goddess whom they praise?!
Poor thing, you are a wreck!
And silly I, not having seen
You once with my own eyes,
Accepted what your scribblers wrote,
Believed your poets' lies.
Oh, what a fool! I took for cash
A Moscow pledge to pay.
How can I after this believe
The things they write again!
Behind the gods come gentlefolk

In gold and silver dressed,
With heavy jowl and portly paunch—
Of well-fed hogs the best!...
They sweat, but closer, closer press
Around the august thing:
Perhaps he'll deign to slap a face
Or show a royal fig,
Or even half a fig to show,
Or maybe tweak a nose—
If but with his own hand.
Then all line up in one long row
And "at attention" stand.
The tsar-god jabbers; and his spouse,
That royal marvel rare,
Just like a heron among birds
Hops briskly here and there.
They walked about a goodly while,
A pair of puffed-up owls,
And talked in whispers all the time—
We couldn't hear at all—
About the fatherland, I think,
The officers' new pips,
And still more drills for army men!...
And then the empress sits
In silence on a tabouret.
I watch: the tsar comes close
To him who is of highest rank
And whops him on the nose!...
Poor fellow, he just licked his lips,
And then poked in the pot
The next in line!... That one then gave
A smaller ace a clout;
That one punched still a smaller fish,
And he—still smaller fry,
Until the smallest at the end
Got theirs and opened wide
The palace gates, and poured outside
Into the city streets
To put the boots to common folks;
Then those began to screech

And holler fit to wake the dead:
"Our royal father deigns to play!
"Hoorah, hoorah, hoorah, 'ray, 'ray!"

I laughed most heartily and left;
I own, in the mêlée
I too got banged. 'Twas nearing dawn,
The city was asleep;
Just here and there some pious folk
Stood groaning on the street,
And moaning, prayed the Lord their tsar
In best of health to keep.
I laughed through tears! Then sauntered forth
The city's sights to see.
The night was bright as day. I look:
Beside the sluggish stream
Rich mansions, palaces abound,
The river banks are seamed—
Shored up with stone. I look about
As though I were entranced!
What magic wrought such marvels here
Where once was a morass?...
What quantities of human blood
Upon this spot were shed—
Without a knife! Across the way
There looms a fortress dread,
Its steeple rising like an awl—
A comic sight to see.
The tower clock ticked off the time.
I turned—and saw a steed
Agalloping, his flying hooves
The granite seemed to cleave!
The rider, bare-back on the horse,
In something like a cloak,
Was hatless, his bare head adorned
With leaves, perhaps of oak.
The steed reared up as though it meant
To leap across the sea.
And he held out his arm as though
He coveted to seize

The world entire. Who is that man?
I read the message terse
Inscribed upon the mound of stone:
"The Second to the First."[29]
I understood right well what's meant
By those laconic words:
The First was he who crucified
Unfortunate Ukraine,
The Second—she who finished off
Whatever yet remained.
Oh, butchers! butchers! cannibals!
And did you gorge and loot
Enough when 'live? And when you died
What did you take with you?
A heavy weight pressed on my heart.
It was as though engraved
Upon that granite I could read
The story of Ukraine.
I stood.... And then I faintly heard
A melancholy strain,
From ghostly lips a mournful song:

"From Glukhov-town at break of dawn
The regiments withdrew
To build abutments on the line.
I, with a Cossack crew,
As acting Hetman of Ukraine[30]
Due northward took my course—
Up to the capital. Oh God!
Oh wicked tsar, accurst!
Oh crafty, evil, grasping tsar,
Oh viper poison-fanged!
What did you with the Cossacks do?
Their noble bones you sank
In the morass and on them raised
Your capital-to-be,[31]
Their tortured bodies at its base!
And me, a hetman free,
You threw into a dungeon dark
And left in chains to die

Of hunger.... Tsar! We'll never part.
We are forever tied
Together by those heavy chains.
E'en God cannot untie
Those bonds between us. Oh, it's hard
Eternally to bide
Beside the Neva! Far Ukraine
Exists, perhaps, no more.
I'd fly to see if she's still there,
But God won't let me go.
It may be Moscow's razed the land,
And emptied to the sea
Our Dnieper, and our lofty mounds
Dug up—so none may see
The relics of our former fame.
Oh God, please pity me."
Then silence fell again. I look:
Across the leaden sky
A white cloud like a sheet was drawn
And from it rose a cry,
A dismal howl. No, not a cloud—
A flock of snowy birds
Soared like a cloud above the tsar
And wailed a mournful dirge:
"We're chained together with you too,
Inhuman monster vile!
When Judgement Day comes we'll screen God
From your rapacious eye.
'Twas you that drove us from Ukraine—
A hungry, tattered lot—
Into these far-off snows to toil,
And here our throats you cut;
Our bloodied skins you used as cloth
To make your purple robe,
You used our sinews as the thread
With which the robe to sew.
Your new throne-city thus you built
Of temples, mansions grand!
Make merry, wicked, vicious tsar!
Be damned! Be damned! Be damned!"

They flew away, they all dispersed.
The morning sun appeared.
I still stood fascinated there,
With mounting sense of fear.
The poor were hurrying to work
Though it was early still,
And soldiers, lined up in the squares,
Were busy at their drills.
Young drowsy girls came scurrying
Along the sidewalk's edge,
But homeward, not away from home
They bent their weary tread!...
Their mothers sent them out all night
To earn a crust of bread.
I stood there with a heavy heart
And bowed my aching head
And thought how hard must people toil
To earn their daily bread.
The horde of clerks then hastened next,
Each to his office nook,
To scribble—and the folks to rob
Of everything they could.
Among them here and there I saw
My fellow-countrymen.
They chattered in the Russian tongue
And bitterly condemned
Their parents that when they were small
They didn't teach them how
To jabber German—so they can't
Get big promotions now!
Oh leeches, leeches! It may be
Your father sadly sold
His last remaining cow that you
The Moscow tongue should know.
My poor Ukraine! My poor Ukraine!
These are your hapless sons,
Your youthful blossoms, splashed with ink,
In German hot-house grown,
On Moscow's silly-potions fed
Until they are inane!...

Oh weep, my childless widow-land!
Unfortunate Ukraine!

And then I turned my steps again
Towards the palace hall
To see what's doing there. I came—
The lords were standing, all
Panting, snorting, short of breath,
Big-bellied, puffed with pride
Like turkey gobblers, and each one
Askance the doorway eyed.
And then the waited second struck—
The portals swung ajar
And like a bear from his dark den
He shambled out—the tsar;
All bloated and his face tinged green;
His hang-over was bad.
He roared at those who stood out front—
The fattest of the fat—
And instantly they disappeared,
Just vanished into air!
With bulging eyes he looked around
And all were struck with fear.
As though he'd gone clean off his head,
At smaller fish he roared—
They disappeared. Then at the fry—
They too were there no more!
To servants next he turned—and they
Were also whisked away.
Then to the soldiers—they dissolved
And didn't leave a trace
Upon the earth. Oh what a sight—
A miracle for fair!
I looked to see what else would be,
What next my little bear
Would do! But he kept standing still
With hanging head. And lo,
What happened to the raging beast
He was a while ago?
Meek as a kitten now—how droll!...

I laughed to see the sight.
He heard and cast a glance at me—
I froze from sudden fright
And woke from sleep....
Such was my rare
And truly wondrous dream!
How odd it was!... 'Tis but by loons
And drunks such dreams are seen.
Don't be astonished at this tale,
My well-beloved friends,
I did not tell you what I'd seen,
But only what I dreamt.

St. Petersburg,
July 8, 1844

Translated
by John Weir

* * *

Don't take yourself a wealthy bride,
She'll drive you from the nest.
Don't take a poor girl for your wife,
For you will have no rest.
Get wedded to a life that's free,
And share the Cossack fate:
If it be rags, let it be rags—
Whatever comes, you take.
Then there'll be nobody to fret,
To sympathise, or moan—
And why you're sore, and where you're
sore
No one will want to know.
They say it's easier to grieve
When two misfortune share.
Not so! It's easier to weep
When no one else is there.

Mirgorod,
1845

Translated
by John Weir

THE HERETIC

To Šafařik[32]

Bad neighbours came and set afire
Their neighbour's good new house:
They warmed themselves and then retired
To sleep, and failed to douse
The smoking ashes from the fire,
And sow them to the winds.
The ashes at the cross-roads lay,
Grown cold, and yet within
A tiny spark alive remained,
And waited for the day
It would be blown into a blaze,
Like an avenger waits
The hour to strike! A long, long time
Still glowed that living spark
And waited where the highways meet,
And then it, too, was dark.

'Twas thus the Germans to the torch
The Slavic mansion put, and rent
The family of Slavs apart,
And slyly planted in their hearts
The savage serpent of dissent.

The blood, in rivers streaming, quenched
The embers that yet glowed.
The fire site and the orphans then
The German neighbours stole.
And so the children of the Slavs

Grew up in slavery;
In shackles fettered, they forgot
Their very history!
But there, where once the fire had burned,
Of brotherhood a brand
Still glowed—still waited to be picked
By strong and steady hand.
'Twas not in vain.... For you looked deep
Where cold the ashes lie,
And found the ember with your heart
And with your eagle eye!
You shone the torch of truth, O Sage,
The light of liberty....
And in the darkness and in chains
The large Slav family
You counted, naming every one,
Although no longer Slavs
But corpses of the Slavs you named.
And high upon a crag—
Upon the cross-roads of the world—
You stood like seer of old.
A miracle!—The corpses rose
And opened up their eyes;
The brothers at each other gazed
And fondly recognised,
Clasped hands in love, and warmly vowed
Forever friends to be!
And all the Slavic rivers flowed
Into a common sea!

Glory to you, sage and prophet,
O Czech, Slavic brother,
That you didn't let our justice
And our truth be smothered,
In the German flood to perish!
The sea you discovered,
The new Slavic sea of freedom,
I see filled with water,
On this sea will sail a vessel
Full speed, sheets distended,

At the wheel a trusted helmsman,
Will steer steady-handed.
May your fame endure, Šafařik,
Forever and ever,
For, into one sea you gathered
All the Slavic rivers!

So, among your many laurels
This mite, too, accept—
My elegy, poor and artless,
To the saintly Czech,
To Jan Hus,[33] exalted martyr
And great patriot!
Please accept this tribute, father.
While I pray to God
That all Slavs as faithful brothers,
As one man should stand,
True sons of the sun of justice
And heretics grand,
Such as was the deathless martyr
That at Constanz[34] flamed!
They'll bring peace to all the nations,
And eternal fame!

Pereyaslav,
1845

> The stone which the builders rejected
> Is become the head of the corner.
> This is the Lord's doing;
> It is marvellous in our eyes.
>
> *Psalm 117, Verse 22*

"With stark injustice all around
The shackled people silent wait,
While on the apostolic throne
There sits a fatted monk in state.

He wholesale trades in human blood
And rents out heaven for a price!
Thy reign's a mockery, O God,
Thy words of truth transformed to lies.
Despoilers, cannibals, O Lord,
Are trampling justice 'neath their heels,
They mock Thy glory and Thy word,
They mock Thy power and Thy will!
The very earth in bondage cries,
As cries a mother for her young:
Are there none, then, prepared to rise
To challenge slavery and wrong.
The gospel of the truth defend,
Direct the unenlightened throng?
Are there not now such righteous men,
O Lord, and never will be none?
Oh no! The day of wrath will come,
The day of Heaven's vengeance just!
And then the Papal Triple-crown
Will come down tumbling to the dust!
It will come tumbling down! To brave
Dire punishment and death
Bless these frail hands of mine, I pray,
O Lord, please give me strength!"
'Twas thus that in his simple cell
Jan Hus, the righteous, took the vow
To break the chains of hell!... To eyes
That were bereft of sight to show
A miracle!
"To battle, then!
God's will be done!... Let come what may!"
And to the Chapel Bethlehem[35]
The good man went to preach and pray.

"In Jesus' holy name, who died
Upon the cross to save us all,
And in the twelve apostles' name,
Of Peter specially, and Paul,
By virtue of this sacred Bull[36]

This woman, servant of the Lord,
Is hereby cleansed of all her sins,
And is absolved...."
"Who is? This whore?
The same who just two days ago
Solicited on Praha's streets.
The same who drunken reeled and rolled
In taverns, in the market-place,
And also on monastic cot!
She paid some money from her gains,
An absolution Bull she bought,
Now she's as pure as any saint!...
Almighty God!

Have mercy on people! In Thy serene heaven
From wreaking relentless revenge take a rest!
Why dost Thou condemn Thy good, loyal children
To punishment ruthless? Take pity! Desist!
Why didst Thou blind their eyes to light,
Their common sense, their reason free
Imprison in the darkest night!...
Oh people, look—the dawn is here!
Awake, O Czechs, from your deep sleep.
Cast off all cant, rise to your feet,
Be men, not butt for priestly jeers!
The robber princes of the church
Have trampled, plundered us, and raped
Our land, as Tatars put the torch
To Muscovy, and then they gave
Their dogmas to us!... Fire and sword,
All that is evil, squabbles, war,
And endless misery and woes....
And Rome with bastards overflows!
Such are their dogmas, such the fame
Which they have earned!... Now all who die,
The holy conclave has proclaimed,
And did not absolution buy,
Go straight to hell! But he who pays
A double price is free to slay

All but the Pope or priest, and then
Goes straight to heaven! It's the end!
Now thieves from one another steal
Right in the church. Oh, serpent's seed!
Have you not drunk your fill of blood?...
O Lord Almighty, it is not
For me, a common man, to judge
The wondrous deeds that by Thy will
Are done on earth. Without a cause
Thou wouldst not work the people ill.

Have mercy on us, Lord, I pray,
Deliver us from evil days!
For blasphemy corrupt my tongue,
But cure the earth of what is wrong.
Do not permit a priesthood vile
Thy glory and Thy name defile
And mock the common human throng!"

And Hus, as thus he prayed to God,
Wept bitterly. "What does he plan?"
The people in amazement thought,
"'Gainst whom dares he to raise his hand!"

"Look, people, look! It's the decree
I read to you...." He lifted it
So all could see. The people reeled:
Hus tore the Papal Bull to bits!!
The echo of his action rolled
Like thunder, till the news was told
In the world capital, in Rome.
The monks sought hide-outs.... Terror
gripped
The hierarchy—fear of doom:
The proud tiara 'gan to slip!!

A serpent-pit, the Vatican
With hissing monks is filled,
The monks of Rome and Avignon
Conspire in whispers shrill,

The anti-Popes[37] together buzz—
This all-pervading hiss
E'en shakes the walls. The cardinals
'Bout the tiara twist
Like serpents. And like alley cats
Over a mouse they spit
And at each other snarl.... Of course
They have good reason to:
There's fur, and hides ... and meat galore!!!
The very walls shook, too,
With grim foreboding when the geese[38]
In Praha 'gan to honk
And flew the eagles to engage
In battle.... Then the monks
Bestirred themselves, in council met
And 'gainst Jan Hus resolved
To take stern steps. In Constanz they
A raven's rally[39] called!
They undertook to closely watch
And all precautions take
Lest to the spacious Slavic plains
The grey-winged fowl escape.

As ravens cover black a field,
So monks converged in mighty throngs
On Constanz city from all sides;
Like hungry locusts, all around
The dukes and barons are encamped
With heralds, minstrel-troubadours
And squires and servants by the score,
While on the highways soldiers tramp
In snake-like columns. Noble dames
Are followed by the German herd,
Some riding asses, some afoot,
And some with falcons—all inflamed
With fever of the hunt, to kill!
O Czech! D'ye hold your courage still??
Look at the might that's here arrayed
As though to bar Atilla's horde
Or else to start a new Crusade!

In Praha angry rumblings grow
The thousand-headed synod's damned,
Both king and emperor[40] condemned
On every side! Hus must not go
To Constanz! But Jan Hus replied,
"God's with me still! I do not quake!
My brothers, I don't fear to die!
I'll teach a lesson to those snakes!
I'll tear their poison fangs away!"
The Czechs then saw him on his way
Like loving sons their father kind....

All bells that morn together tolled
In Constanz for the meet.
The cardinals in crimson robes
Foregathered, fat and sleek
Like prize bulls in a cattle pen.
The prelates took their seats,
Three Popes, some kings, and noblemen
Of various degrees;
Like Judases, in court unjust
They had assembled there
To judgement pass on Jesus Christ.
A clamour filled the air
Like in a Tatar camp, or when
A Jewish school is on.... And then—
The din stopped dead and all were hushed!...

Straight, like a cypress on a plain
In Lebanon—encased in chains,
He calmly stood before them: Hus!
He swept the whole assembly base
With eagle eye from face to face.
With limbs atremble, pallid cheeks,
His judges at the martyr gazed
In heavy silence. "Did you seek
My presence here for a debate?
Or did you wish my chains to see??"
"Be silent, brazen Czech...." They hissed

Like vipers stirred up in their nest,
Then roared like frenzied beasts:
"A heretic! A heretic!
You sow dissension's evil seed!
You seek to foster schisms and splits!
God's holy will you do not heed!..."
"Pray, let me speak one word!" cried Hus.
"A heretic! You're damned by God!
A heretic! A heretic!..."
The prelates in a frenzy roared,
"A trouble-maker!..." "Just one word!"
"You are condemned! You're damned by all!..."
Jan Hus looked hard at the three Popes
And walked out of the palace hall!...
"We've brought him down! We've brought him down!..."
Restraint had long gone overboard.
"Auto-da-fé! Auto-da-fé!"
The synod all together roared.

The whole night long the monks and dukes
Their triumph fêted ... feasted, drank,
And drunkenly they railed at Hus,
Until the matin church bells rang.
The dawn.... The monks retired to pray
For Hus. The sun, a ball of fire,
Rose o'er the mountain. Did it, too,
That morning want to watch what they
To this most righteous man would do?...

In Constanz all the bells were tolled
As Hus in chains was led
Along his own Golgotha road....
He showed no sign of dread
But, climbing on the faggot pile,
He turned and prayed aloud:
"O God of mercy, what's my crime?
What have I done, O Lord,
To these, Thy people? Men of God!
Why do they want my blood?

Why am I nailed upon the cross?
Oh listen, people! Pray!
Oh pray, ye guiltless ones, because
You, too, will end this way!
For savage beasts into the fold
Have crept as sheep disguised,
And now their wolfish claws they show....
You'll find no place to hide,
No shelter from their greedy fangs.
A sea of blood will flow!
The blood from your own children's veins....
Oh woe, my people, woe!
There, there in crimson robes attired
They stand! Their eyes are mad
With lust.... It's blood...."
"Set fire! Set fire!"
"It's blood that they demand!
They want your blood!..." Then clouds of smoke
Concealed Jan Hus from view.
"Pray, people!" still the good man spoke,
"They know not what they do!
Forgive them, Lord...." No further sound
Came from the martyr's pyre!
With eyes intent, the monks like hounds
Were clustered 'round the fire.
They feared he'd snake out from the coals
And slip along the ground
To the tiara of the Pope
Or to a royal crown.

The fire died down. The wind blew free
The ashes o'er the ground.
And yet the common folk could see
A red snake wrapped around
The triple-crown. The monks retired
Te Deum for to sing,
Then to the festive boards they hied
To gorge themselves and drink
Till they were bloated fit to burst.
With heavy hearts and sore,

A group of Czechs came, scraped some earth
From where he died, and bore
That dust to Praha. It was thus
The monks condemned to die
And at the stake burned good Jan Hus....
And yet God's truth defies
Their bonfire. From behind the clouds
An eagle, not a goose,
Shall swoop, the triple-crown to claw—
And they don't even guess!
Without a care, the monks and lords
Dispersed each to his nest
From that red feast, like carrion crows.
In idleness they rest
And roister in their castle dens.
And as they feast and drink
And chant *Te Deum* now and then,
Their skins are safe, they think.
The danger is no more.... But wait!
Old Žižka[41] in Tabor
Above his hoary head has raised
And flashed the mace for war.

Village Maryinske,
October 10, 1845

Translated
by John Weir

THE SERVANT WOMAN

PROLOGUE

Early on a Sabbath day
Wrapped in mist the country lay.
On a mound, in mist enfolded,
To her breast a bundle holding,
Stood a woman, young and wistful
Like a poplar, in a whisper
Talking sadly to the mist:

"Mist, oh mist, do hear my plea,
Pity me in my ordeal!
Oh, why don't you bury me,
Hide me in this lonely field!
Oh, why don't you smother me,
Crush me so I would not breathe,
And my days of suffering
Thus make mercifully brief!
No, mist, no, don't smother me,
With your cloak just cover me,
Hide me so my misery
None should know and none should see!
I'm not alone, I've left behind
My father and my mother....
I also have ... I have, besides,
Oh mist! There is one other...
I have a son, a tiny child,
A soul unnamed and unbaptised!
It's not I who will baptise you,
To my bitter, bitter woe,
It is strangers who'll baptise you,

I will never even know
What they've called you, where to find
you....
Oh my son, my very own!
Do not curse me! I'll be praying,
God will hear a mother's prayer,
Happiness He'll send from heaven,
Fortune kind will be your share."

Bowed in grief, she walked away
Through the mist with footsteps slow,
Singing tearfully a lay
Of a widow's bitter woe
As she buried her two babes
In the Danube long ago:

"There's a grave mound on the plain,
There a widow came one day,
Poison grass she came to find,
Poison grass she did not find
And her time was coming nigh.
In the field she had to lie,
Her two boys in cloth to bind,
Take them to the Danube wide.
'River, river, take my babes,
Rock them gently on your waves!
Yellow sand, with soft caress,
Feed my babies at your breast,
Sing to them a lullaby,
Cover them in peace to lie!'"

1.

Beside the grove lived all their life
A kind old man and his good wife
In their nice cottage near the pond,
Like children ever,
Always together.
They'd tended lambs as children young,
Grew up and married later on.
They bought a cow, and built a home,

A water mill then came to own,
An orchard planted by the grove,
And beehives not a few they got—
Of everything they had a lot.
But in their home there was no child,
And Death was nearing with his scythe!

Who'll cherish them when they are old,
Who'll be a loving son to them?
Who'll say a prayer for their souls,
Who'll mourn their passing, weep for them?
Who other than their flesh and blood
In time their legacy will share
And think of them with gratitude,
Recall how good and kind they were?
It's hard to rear a brood of young
When you've no home to call your own,
But harder still to age alone
In mansion splendid, but forlorn,
To grow infirm and leave this world,
Your property bequeathed to none,
So utter strangers squander all,
Ungratefully, in careless fun.

2.

The couple, on the day of rest,
Were sitting in their Sunday best
Upon a bench beneath the trees.
The sun was shining. Not a breeze,
No wisp of cloud the blue disturbed,
'Twas like a paradise on earth.
But like a beast in forest murk
Deep in their hearts a sadness lurked.

Why sorrow in this heaven fair,
What more could these good people want?
Perhaps some grief of yester-year
Had 'wakened now their peace to haunt?
Was it some hurt of long ago
That stirred again their hearts to pain?

Or some new trouble just arose
This paradise to set aflame?
What is the cause of their despair?
Perhaps they grieve because they know
That soon to God they must repair
And there is nobody to care,
To hitch their horses for the road....

"Oh, who will lay us in our graves?"
And Nastya answered: "I can't say.
It's had me worried all my days,
It hurts to think we've reached old age
And we've no one our hearts to cheer....
For whom then did we scrape and save
All this.... But listen, do you hear?
There's someone crying, seems to me....
Sounds like a baby.... It's quite near!
Let's go and see what it can be,
Come on, let's hurry. Hear it? Hear?"

And off they hurried to the gate
Whence came the piteous, plaintive sound.
And there they stopped and silent gazed.
A baby lay upon the ground
Beside the fence. The bundle wee
Was loosely wrapped, but o'er it lay
A new warm coat. 'Twas clear to see
It was the mother who had laid
Her baby here, and lovingly
Had o'er it spread her only coat....
Trokhim and Nastya stood bedazed
And whispered prayers, while the babe,
As though 'twas pleading for their care,
Had freed its tiny arms and stretched
Them up towards the ageing pair....
And now the mite no longer cried,
Just gave a whimper, soft and weak.
"Wake up, Nastya, can't you speak?
Here's our answer, don't you see?
Here's our fortune and delight,

You and I have got a son!
Take the baby, mother him...
Hope the day's a lucky one.
Take him home, and I will go
And invite the sponsors...."

Verily, how strange the things
That occur among us!
Here one curses his own son,
Driving him from house and home;
Others, parenthood denied,
Work their fingers to the bone
Candles for the church to buy,
Day and night they pray the saints—
All in vain!... Indeed the things
Happening on this earth are strange!

3.

Not just two but six godparents
Gladly to the christening came.
That same night the child was
christened,
Marko was his given name.
Marko grew. Trokhim and Nastya
Simply doted on the boy,
Fussing over him and bustling
In anxiety and joy.
In a year the child grew lusty,
And the milch cow for his sake
Lived in clover, as we say.
Then, a woman came one day,
Very young and full of grace,
Dark of brow and fair of face,
Seeking work as housemaid
In this happy, blessed place.
"Nastya, should we take her, eh?"
"Yes, Trokhim, I think we should.
We are old and often ail,
Then there's little Marko, too.

True, the baby's big and strong,
Still he needs an able nurse,
He wants care the whole day long."
"Yes, indeed, our Marko does.
Also, I have trod the earth
Long enough, I think. And now,
Daughter, let us come to terms.
You'll want yearly pay, or how?"
"I'll take anything you say."
"No, my girl, that's not the way!
You must care about your pay,
It's your honest, hard-earned pay.
Those who don't will always stay
With a sadly empty purse.
Do it this way: try it out,
And we'll all see how it works.
You don't know us or our ways,
We don't know you and can't tell
If we're suited. Of your wage
We shall talk another time.
All right, daughter?" "Very well."
"We're agreed then. Come inside."

That settled it. The housemaid
Was so excited and elate
That one would think a prince she'd wed
Or come into a rich estate.
Working hard from dawn till dark,
In the house and the yard,
She sang as happy as a lark.
To mind the child she never tired,
With motherly and loving care
She washed and combed his silky hair,
And dressed him up each blessed day
As if it were a holiday.
She played with him, and made him toys,
And sang him songs. It was her joy
On holidays, the whole day long,
To fuss around the darling boy.
Trokhim and Nastya watched her ways

And blessed the day she came to stay.
They could not know that their poor maid,
To anguished sleepless nights condemned,
Was cursing her misfortune cruel
As she lay sobbing in her bed.
No one heard it, no one knew it,
No one saw the tears she shed,
No one but the little babe.
The little one he could not know
Why 'twas his nurse, their housemaid,
So wept in anguish over him.
Nor could he know, of course, what made
Her kiss him so and fondle him,
And why the sweetest bits she laid
With loving care aside for him,
Nor why, if in the dead of night
He stirred in sleep or even turned,
At once she'd be there at his side
With truly motherly concern
To bless him, put his covers right,
And lull him with a gentle croon.
Why 'twas she heard his breathing light
While sleeping in another room.
And Marko, waking in the morn,
His baby arms stretched out to her,
And called her Mother, needing her,
His Hannah who was always there....
He did not know. Thus Marko grew
To man's estate without a care.

4.

The years rolled ever on and on,
Much water 'neath the bridge had run,
Death also visited this home,
And sorrow brought to everyone.
Old Nastya's fateful end had come,
And poor Trokhim all but succumbed.
Accurst misfortune took its own,
And then it left them well alone.
And blessedness once more returned

From 'yond the woods where it had flown,
To settle down in Trokhim's home.

Marko drives a cart to town,
Autumn nights he never now
Spends at home, asleep in bed....
It was time the lad was wed.
"Whom should we take?" thought old Trokhim,
And then asked Hannah, faithful maid,
For her advice. She'd have been glad
To pick for Marko as a mate
A princess royal! "Let's ask him,
Let Marko tell us whom he'd wed."
"So be it. Let us speak to him,
And after that we'll go ahead."
And so they did. A fitting match
For Marko had to be arranged.
Matchmakers went and soon came back
And brought the bread they had exchanged
With parents of the bride-to-be.
She was both young and dignified,
And beautiful, and dressed so fine
A hetman surely wouldn't mind
To be her groom. She was indeed
A very wonder of a bride!

"I thank you kindly," said Trokhim.
"And now the date we must release,
Tell all the folks so they will know
Just when the wedding feast will be.
There's only one thing worries me:
Who will our Marko's mother be?
My Nastya hasn't lived to see...."
Trokhim could not go on for tears.
And in the doorway Hannah stood,
Their servant woman all these years,
The door-post gripping lest she swoon,
She could not make a move or speak,
And only whispered brokenly:
"Ah, who, who'll Marko's mother be?"

5.

Very soon the matrons came
To Trokhim's to bake the cake
For the wedding. Old Trokhim,
Bravely mastering the shakes,
Danced with all the fair young wives,
Laughed and joked, then went outside,
Swept the yard and gladly hailed
All those walking past his gate
To come in and taste his ale,
At the wedding be his guests.
Though unsteady on his legs,
On he bustled, none the less.
All were laughing, noisy, gay,
Both inside the house and out.
From the cellars where they lay
Kegs of wine came rolling out.
All were busy cooking, baking,
Scrubbing, cleaning all around...
Strangers all. But where is Hannah?
Hannah's gone to Kiev town,
Though Trokhim had begged her stay;
In his mother's place to sit
Tearfully had Marko prayed.
"Marko, no, it isn't fit
That I take your mother's place.
All your friends are well-to-do,
And I'm just a housemaid,
They would only laugh at you.
May the Lord guard over you!
To the shrines in Kiev town
I must go and pray the saints.
Then I will return to you,
If you'll have me back again.
While I've strength left in my limbs
I shall work..." with feeling deep
She told Marko, blessing him
From her heart. Her tears ran free
As she left him at the gate.

The wedding feast was in full swing,
Musicians played, heels tapped away,
All hard at work. The tables groaned
With food and wine and home-brewed ale.
While Hannah, footsore, hurried on
To Kiev at the shrines to pray.
She got to town and straightaway,
Before she stopped to rest or sleep,
She sought a place where she could
stay
And fetching water earn her keep,
Saving from her meagre pay
For St. Barbara's holy day.
Pail she carried after pail.
And some kopeks eight she saved.
At the shrine of John the Martyr
In the ancient Kiev caves
Hannah bought a cap for Marko
So his head should never ache;
At St. Barbara's shrine she bought
Marko's wife a ring to wear.
Then she prayed the saints once more,
Crossed herself, and home repaired.
Marko and his lovely bride
Hurried out to meet her
At the gate, took her inside,
At the table seated,
Pressing food on her, the while
Listening to Hannah's tale.
And when night came, Katerina
Bade her in the front room stay.
"No, I don't deserve such love,
Why do they respect me so?
Oh my Lord in Heav'n above,
Surely it can't be they know?
Have they guessed perhaps, and they...
No, they haven't, they're just kind,
They're just good...."
The hired maid
Wept and tossed all through the night.

6.

Thrice the pond was frozen tight,
Thrice again it melted down,
Thrice Kat'rina saw old Hannah
Off to holy Kiev town
Like a daughter. And again
She saw Hannah on the way
For the fourth time; to the mound
Walked with her, and begged and prayed
That she should not tarry long,
'Cause their happy, blessed home
Would seem cheerless and forlorn
With their loving mother gone.

One Sunday, following Assumption,
Trokhim dressed in his best white shirt
Was basking in the pleasant sunshine
In great content. Before him romped
His little grandson with his pup,
There, too, his baby sister now
All dressed up in her mother's skirt,
Came calling on Grandpa. She bowed
As matrons do. Trokhim played up
And welcomed her with face kept straight:
"What happened to the loaf you'd baked?
P'raps in the forest you were robbed,
Or else forgotten it at home?
Or never had one baked to bring?
Oh shame, oh shame!... But look who's
come!"
Why, it was Hannah walking in!
The two young children and Trokhim
All ran to meet her at the gate.
"Where's Marko? Is he not yet home?"
She asked in great anxiety.
Trokhim replied: "He still is gone."
And Hannah said: "I thought my feet
Would never, never get me home.
I didn't want to die out there,

In strange surroundings, all alone.
If I could last till he comes back....
My heart's so heavy and so grieved!"
And then she took out of her bag
The gifts she brought for them from Kiev:
Little crosses, holy medals,
A string of beads for young Irene,
An icon framed in silver foil,
The nicest icon ever seen.
She had a whistle for the boy,
Toy horses too, a jolly pair;
For Marko's wife a ring once more,
Kat'rina's fourth that she'd bought there
In Kiev's shrines; and last of all
Three slender candles for Trokhim
Blessed at the church. And as for Marko,
This time there was no gift for him
Or for herself: her money spent,
She had no strength more pails to fetch,
She felt so ill, and home she went.
"Here's half a roll that I have left,
Come, share it, children," Hannah said,
And gave a little piece to each.

7.

In they went, and Katerina
Bathed old Hannah's weary feet,
And invited her to dinner,
But she couldn't drink or eat.
She said: "Tell me, Katerina,
When is Sunday, I forget."
"This is Friday." "Then, my dear one,
Sunday have a service sung
To St. Nicholas the healer,
Just in case there's something wrong.
Why does Marko take so long!
God forbid that he should sicken
On a distant road somewhere...."
And the servant, old and stricken,

Burst out crying in despair.
Slowly, on the table leaning,
Hannah got up to her feet.
"I am ailing, Katerina.
I'm unwell, I feel so weak,
I can hardly stand alone....
It's bitter dying in a home
That's blest and warm, but not your
own...."
She felt very, very bad,
Though the Eucharist she took,
Extreme unction, too, she had,
Nothing seemed to do her good.
Old Trokhim about the place
Like a lost soul wandered,
And a daughter couldn't be
Than Kat'rina fonder.
Day and night she hovered near,
Always there at Hannah's side.
But the hooting of the barn owls
In the silence of the night
Boded grief to come. And Hannah
Fretted every waking hour,
Every minute of the day.
"Oh, my daughter Katerina,
Why is Marko still away!
If I knew that it was fated
That I'd see him if I waited,
I would wait until he came."

8.

With the ox-cart drivers' train
Homeward bound is Marko now.
Leisurely they make their way,
Resting while the oxen browse.
Marko's gift for Katerina
Is a length of splendid cloth,
And a red silk sash he's bringing
For his Dad to cut a swath.

For their faithful housemaid
There's a white-fringed shawl to
wear,
And a piece of gold brocade
For a cap to hide her hair.
Fancy boots he's bought the children,
Lots of figs and raisins sweet,
And some good old wine of Tsargrad
All of them to give a treat.
There's a barrel of it there,
And some caviar from the Don,
Gifts he's bringing, unaware
Things are what they are at home.

On he drives without a care.
Thank the Lord, he has arrived!
At the gate he says a prayer,
Opens it and throws it wide.
"Katerina, I could swear
I heard somebody arrive!
Marko's come. Go quickly,
daughter,
Hurry, bring him right inside.
Thank Thee, Jesus Christ Our Saviour
That my tryst I've lived to keep!"
And she whispered the Lord's Prayer,
Softly, softly, as in sleep.

Old Trokhim unhitched the oxen,
Put away the shaft and pin,
While Kat'rina welcomed Marko,
Feasted loving eyes on him.
"Where is Hannah, Katerina?
She's not dead now, surely?"
"She's not dead, but very near it,
Hannah's very poorly.
While your father's busy here
With the oxen, Marko,
Let us go to her, my dear,
Ease her awful heartache."

Marko walked into the room,
On the threshold stopped, aghast.
Hannah whispered in the gloom:
"Thank the Lord, he's here at last!
Come close, Marko, don't be frightened.
Leave us two, my daughter dear,
There is something I must ask him,
Something Marko's got to hear."
Softly walked out Katerina.
Marko, grieved and smitten,
Bent down close to Hannah's pillow.
"Marko," she said, "Listen.
Look at me, look very closely,
See how near the end I've come....
I am not your servant, Marko,
I'm...." but she could not go on.
Marko gazed at her and wondered.
Hannah raised her eyes again,
At his face she looked intently,
Then to sobs and tears gave way.
"Please forgive me! How I suffered
All my life ... no home my own....
Please forgive, forgive me, Marko!
I'm your mother.... Marko ... son."
She fell silent. He stood swaying
As the whole world heaved.
He came to.... "Oh mother, mother!"
She no longer breathed.

Pereyaslav,
November 13, 1845

Translated
by Olga Shartse

THE CAUCASUS

To My True Friend, Yakov de Balmen[42]

"O that my head were waters,
And mine eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain...."
Jeremiah, Chapter 9, Verse 1

Mighty mountains, row on row, blanketed with cloud,
Planted thick with human woe, laved with human blood.

Chained to a rock, age after age
Prometheus there bears
Eternal punishment—each day
His breast the eagle tears.
It rends the heart but cannot drain
The life-blood from his veins—
Each day the heart revives again
And once again is gay.
Our spirit never can be downed,
Our striving to be free.
The sateless one will never plow
The bottom of the sea.
The vital spirit he can't chain,
Or jail the living truth.
He cannot dim the sacred flame,
The great god's fame on earth.

'Tis not for us to duel with Thee!
Not ours the right to judge Thy deeds!
Ours but to weep and weep, and weeping,
To knead the daily bread we eat
With tears and sweat and blood unending.
We groan beneath the yoke of hangmen,
While drunken justice sodden sleeps.

Oh, when will justice rise at last,
And God, when wilt Thou give
Thyself from all Thy toil a rest?—
And let the people live!
Yet we believe in Thy great might
And in the living soul.
There shall be liberty and right!
And then to Thee alone
All tongues will pray, all heads will bow
For ever and ever.
But in the meantime, rivers flow,
The blood of men in rivers!

Mighty mountains, row on row, blanketed with cloud,
Planted thick with human woe, laved with human blood.
'Twas there that We, the Gracious,[43] found
Poor freedom hiding 'mid the crags
(A hungry thing, and all in rags),
And sick'd our dogs to drag her down.
A host of soldiers on those hills
Gave up their lives. And as for blood!?
All emperors could drink their fill,
In widows' tears alone they could
Be drowned together with their seed!
The sweetheart's tears, in secret shed!
Unsolaceable mothers' tears!
The heavy tears of fathers hoary!
Not streams, but veritable seas
Of blazing tears! So—Glory! Glory!
To hounds, and keepers of the hounds,
And to our rulers golden-crowned
Glory!

And glory, mountains blue, to you,
In ageless ice encased!
And glory, freedom's knights, to you,
Whom God will not forsake.
Keep fighting—you are sure to win!

God helps you in your fight
For fame and freedom march with you,
And right is on your side!

A hut, a crust—but all your own,
Not granted by a master's grace,
No lord to claim them for his own,
No lord to drive you off in chains.
With us, it's different! We can read,
The Gospel of the Lord we know!...
And from the dankest dungeon deep
Up to the most exalted throne—
We're all in gold and nakedness.
Come, learn from us! We'll teach you what
The price of bread is, and of salt!
We're Christian folk; with shrines we're blest,
We've schools, and wealth, and we have God!
Just one thing does not give us rest:
How is it that your hut you've got
Without our leave; how is it we
To you, as to a dog a bone,
Your crust don't toss! How can it be
That you don't pay us for the sun!
And that is all! We're Christian folk,
We are not heathens—here below
We want but little!... You would gain!
If only you'd make friends with us,
There's much that you would learn from us!
Just look at all our vast domains—
Boundless Siberia alone!
And prisons—myriads! Peoples—throngs!
From the Moldavian to the Finn
All silent are in all their tongues
Because such great contentment reigns!
With us, a priest the Bible reads
And then to teach the flock proceeds
About a king of ancient times,
Who took to bed his best friend's bride,
And slew the friend he wronged besides....

Now he's in heaven! See the kind
We send to heaven! You're denied,
As yet, our holy Christian light!
Come, learn from us! With us, it's
loot,
But pay the shot,
And straight to God,
And take your family to boot!
Just look at us! What don't we know?
We count the stars, and flax we grow,
And curse the French. We trade or sell,
And sometimes lose in cards as well,
Live souls ... not Negroes ... our own
stock,
And Christians, too ... but common folk.
We don't steal slaves! No, God forbid!
We do not trade in stolen goods.
We act according to the rules!...

You love your brother as is writ
Within the Golden Rule?!
O damned by God, O hypocrites,
O sacrilegious ghouls!
Not for your brother's soul you care,
But for your brother's hide!
And off your brother's back you tear:
Rich furs for daughter's pride,
A dowry for your bastard child,
And slippers for your spouse.
And for yourself, things that your wife
Won't even know about!

For whom, O Jesus, Son of God,
Then wert Thou crucified?
For us good folks, or for the word
Of truth.... Or to provide
A spectacle at which to laugh?
That's what has come to pass.
Temples and chapels, icons and shrines,
And candlesticks, and myrrh incense,

And genuflexion, countless times
Before Thy image, giving thanks
For war and loot and rape and blood,—
To bless the fratricide they beg Thee,
Then gifts of stolen goods they bring Thee,
From gutted homes part of the loot!...
We're civilised! And we set forth
To enlighten others,
To make them see the sun of truth....
Our blind, simple brothers!!!
We'll show you everything! If but
Yourselves to us you'll yield.
The grimmest prisons how to build,
How shackles forge of steel,
And how to wear them!... How to pleat
The cruelest knouts!—Oh yes, we'll teach
You everything! If but to us
Your mountains blue you'll cede,
The last ... because your seas and fields
We have already seized.

And you, my good Yakov, you also were driven
To die in those mountains! Your life you have given
For your country's hangmen, and not for Ukraine,
Your life clean and blameless. 'Twas your fate to drain
The Muscovite goblet, the full, fatal draught!
Oh friend good and noble, who'll be never forgot!
Now wander, free spirit, all over Ukraine
And with the brave Cossacks soar over her coast,
Keep watch o'er the grave mounds on her spreading plains,
And weep with the Cossacks o'er all of her woes,
And wait till from prison I come home again.
And in the meantime—I shall sow
My thoughts, my bitter tears,
My words of wrath. Oh, let them grow
And whisper with the breeze.
The gentle breezes from Ukraine
Will lift them up with dew

And carry them to you, my friend!...
And when they come to you,
You'll welcome them with tender tears
And read each heartfelt line....
The mounds, the steppes, the sea and me
They'll bring back to your mind.

Pereyaslav,
November 18, 1845

Translated
by John Weir

TO THE DEAD,
THE LIVING AND THE UNBORN

COUNTRYMEN OF MINE
IN THE UKRAINE AND OUTSIDE THE UKRAINE
MY FRIENDLY MESSAGE[44]

> "If a man say, I love God, and
> hateth his brother, he is a liar!"
> *The First Epistle General of John,*
> *Chapter 4, Verse 20*

God's day passes: now 'tis morning,
Now 'tis dusk, now even.
Men and beasts and all things living
Sleep.... Alone I'm driven
Day and night, like one by Heaven
Cursed and damned, to weep at
This great world's most densely crowded,
At its many-peopled
Crossroads.... No one sees or hears me;
Deaf to feeling, blindly
Trade they do in Truth and Honour,
Irons change for irons.
God they mock, and yokes they fit on
Human necks and shoulders.
Grief they plant, and seeds of evil
Sow.... The crops—behold them!—
Well deserved are they by tillers
Such as these.... But cover
Not your ears, and list, you ninnies,
To my counsel. Love her,
Love your land, this quiet Eden,
This great ruin; kindly
Gaze on sweet Ukraine, your mother,
Burst the chains that bind you
And be friends to one another,
Friends and brothers!... Vainly
Seek you do, I vow, in Heaven
And in strange and alien

Lands the many things of wonder
That you crave. Pray, heed me:
In your house, your own, you'll find them—
Truth and strength and freedom.

There's only one Ukraine, and only
One Dnieper in the world—yet you
Go off to foreign parts and roam them
In search of what is good and true,
In search of freedom, holy freedom,
And holy brotherhood.... Hurrah!
Found, found at last, and borne in greedy
Delight from alien shores and far
To the Ukraine—words.... Yes, big-sounding,
High-flowing words, naught else. If God
Created you, you shout, 'twas not
To make you worship lies!... Confound it,
You are unchanged—you never cease
To bow, and scrape, and cringe, and fleece
Your brothers, growers of grain, and lightly
Dance off to foreign parts where you
Feel very much at home quite rightly,
And there bask in the Sun of Truth.
If but our misery you could
Take with you, and the treasures stolen
By your dear forebears, then, I vow,
The Dnieper and its ring of holy
Hills would be orphaned here and now!
If only you left us and no more came back here,
If only you croaked where it was you were reared!—
No mother would weep and no child sob, forsaken,
And ne'er your invective of God would they hear.
This earth, free of you, would stay clean
and unsullied,
This steppeland, unfettered, this air,
sweet and pure,
And men would not know or despise you for your
Contemptible ways born of malice and folly.
Come, bethink yourselves, be human,
Or the chained and fettered

With the lot of you, you monsters,
Their accounts will settle!
They will break their chains, and judgement
Pass on you. The Dnieper
And the hills will roar, rebellious!...
Ever wider, deeper
Will the streams of blood, your children's
Blood, become. The stormy
Sea they'll reach, a hundred crimson
Rivers.... None, I warn you,
None will help you, none defend you,
Son will turn on mother,
And in bitter hate and fury,
Brother slaughter brother.
Know: your sons will damn and curse you,
Smoke will dim the heavens.
Wash the filth off! Do not sully
God's clean image. Never
Tell your children they were born to
Lord it over others.
Deep into their souls, their very
Souls their artless brother
Peer he will and know whose glossy
Skin you wear. The better
The untaught will get and simple
Of the wise and lettered!

If you applied yourselves to study,
You'd learn to think, but no—the skies
You climb, and mumble, dazed and muddled:
"We are not we, I am not I!
All have I seen, all know," and even:
"There is no hell, there is no Heaven,
There is no God, God is a lie,
There's only 'self' and too a bony
And long-faced German." "Good, but only
What is this 'self'?"
"Our friend, the German,
Knows, we don't." You journeyed
Far to get such wondrous schooling,

Such a wealth of learning!
"Mongols, all of you!" your German
Friend will utter boldly.
Barebacked offspring of a ruler—
Tamerlane the Golden.[45]
"Slavs!" he'll cry. "You're Slavs!" Deny it
I will not—descendants
Mean and wretched of a noble
Race. You've put your hands on
Jan Kollar, Šafařik, Hanka[46]
And devour them, feeding
On their brains. The robes of true-blue
Slavophils, my greedy
Friends, you proudly don. The Slavic
Tongues you've learned and mastered,
All of them save yours: forgotten
It remains.... No matter!
You will learn it from your German
Friend and faithful preacher,
And our history, I doubt not,
He will likewise teach you.
How you'll strut about and swagger!...
There you are—his word is
Your command, you strut and swagger,
And our tongue you murder.
Why, it even leaves your famous
Teacher somewhat puzzled,
Let alone the common people....
And what noise! What dazzling,
Pompous words: "Power, force," and also
"Harmony" and "music."
And our history—"an epic,
All things noble fusing,
Of a free and mighty people!"
Rome and all its fearless
Brutuses and Cocleses—
What a farce! Our heroes
Greater are by far.... And freedom—
'Twas the Dnieper laved it,
'Twas these rolling steppes that fed it,

'Twas these hills that gave it
Shelter...." Nay, 'twas washed
by streams of
Blood and tears, and pillowed
On a mound of Cossack corpses,
On a lofty hill of
Ravaged corpses!... Read, I pray you,
Read our book of glory,
Let no word, no line escape you
Of that tragic story!
Do not miss a single tittle
Or a single comma.
Read, and ask yourselves: whose children
Are we? What's become of
Us that we should be in fetters?
Then the worth and merit
You will see of all your valiant
Brutuses, I swear it.
Slaves, Moscow's filth and dirt, the scum
Of Warsaw—that is what your lords are,
Your Hetmans![47] Aye, to you these words are
Addressed, Ukraine's proud offspring... Come,
Boast you that better than your fathers
You fit the yoke, friends? Do not boast!
For you are only birched and belted
And have your skin stripped off, at most,
While out of them the fat was melted.
That the Faith the Cossacks fought for
And in distant Trabzon
Boiled their famous dumplings—is it
This you boast of, brethren?
Aye, they ate their fill, I'll warrant!
As for you—you hunger,
And the crafty Germans living
In the Sich among you,
Plant potatoes for your pleasure....[48]
Eat them, and the fame of
This, the land of freeborn Cossacks,
Sing! You care not, plainly,
Whose hot blood our soil has nourished.

All you want, I doubt not,
Is for this same soil to yield you
Spuds galore, and whatnot.
Yet you boast of our past conquests,
Poland's fall recalling.
Aye, she fell, but *you*, my stalwarts,
You she crushed in falling!
For Moscow and for Warsaw too
Our fathers shed their blood.... They left us
That which they knew to be their due:
Their martial glory and their fetters!

To the end of her endurance
Has Ukraine been fighting.
Worse than any Poles her children
Torture and deride her.
From her heart, as if 'twere merely
Ale or beer, her righteous
Blood they draw, and proper vision,
Modern vision, try to
Give the hag. They'd have her marching
With the times, the cripple!
'Tis the Germans she must follow—
All quite right and simple.
Lead her onward, do, the blinded
Creature and bewildered,
Help her see, and she will care for
Her precocious children,
For the whole new brood, I promise!
Lead her on, and richly
For so doing she'll reward you:
Wisdom she will teach you.
From your greedy eyes the blinding
Scales will fall, and clearly
Through your fathers' living glory
That you prize so dearly
You will see.... Don't lie,
not ever,
To yourselves, I warn you.

Study foreign books and writings,
But, my brethren, scorn not
Ours, our own. The Lord doth punish
Him who spurns his mother:
By his children he is treated
Like a leper; other
People too the villain banish
From their homes in horror;
Shunned by all, the earth he wanders....
Grief, a haunting sorrow
Fills my heart whene'er the sorry
Doings of my forebears
I remember.... To forget them
Yearn I do with sober
Mind and clear, and half of all my
Years on earth would offer
If but God relieved my spirit
Of remembrance.... Often
Do I think: such is the glory
Of Ukraine, and shudder.
Heed my words, and let the sleepless
Dream and, dreaming, ponder
Of injustice.... Let the lofty
Mounds where lie the tortured
Come asunder; let the martyrs
Scathing tales and scorching
Of the fiends who slew them
tell you....
Brethren mine, embrace your
Younger brothers, I beseech you.
Proudly then you'll face your
Weeping mother, smiling mother....
Of her fate the mistress,
Free at last, a slave no longer,
She will bless and kiss you.
And forgot will be the shameful
Years of wrong forever,
And revived will be the glory
Of Ukraine, and fairer
Will she be, and glow the brighter

In the rays of morning.
Come, embrace, my friends and brothers,
Heed me, I implore you!

Vyunishcha,
December 14, 1845

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

TESTAMENT[49]

When I die, pray, bury me
In my beloved Ukraine,
My tomb upon a grave mound high
Amid the spreading plain,
So that the fields, the boundless steppes,
The Dnieper's plunging shore
My eyes might see, and my ears hear
The mighty river roar.

When from Ukraine the Dnieper bears
Into the deep blue sea
The blood of foes ... then will I leave
These hills and fertile fields—
I'll leave them all and fly away
To the abode of God,
And then I'll pray.... But till that day
I nothing know of God.

Oh bury me, then rise ye up
And break your heavy chains
And water with the tyrants' blood
The freedom you have gained.
And in the great new family,
The family of the free,
With softly spoken, kindly word,
Pray, men, remember me.

Pereyaslav,
December 25, 1845

Translated
by John Weir

THE LILY

"Why did to me from childhood days
The people bear ill-will?
And why was I when but a maid
By those same people killed?
And yet today why do they prize
My presence in their rooms,
Call me a queen, can't feast their eyes
Enough upon my blooms?
Why do they now my praises sing
And hold me in esteem?
Pray tell me, flower-of-the-king,[50]
What can the reason be?"
"Alas, my sister, I don't know,"
Said flower-of-the-king,
As tenderly to her he bowed
His head of rose-and-pink
To touch the Lily's pallid cheek,
A crumb of comfort bring.
And then the Lily 'gan to weep,
Her tears the purest dew....
She softly wept, and then she said:
"My brother, I and you
Have loved each other long, yet I
Have never told you, friend,
The story of my human life,
The woes I suffered then....
Why did my mother always grieve
And sorrow over me?

When looking at me, why did she
So sadly sigh and weep?
The reason then I did not know,
My brother, why she cried,
Or who it was had wrong'd her so.
I was a little child
And child-like busily I played,
Quite happy at my games,
While she grew weaker day by day
And cursed our master's name.
She died. The master took me then
Into his manor hall.
And so I spent my youth within
Those stately mansion walls.
There I grew up, yet did not guess
I was his bastard child.
And then abroad the master went,
While I was left behind.
The people cursed him, and they came,
The manor set afire....
And me ... they did not kill or maim,
But—I can't fathom why—
Cut off my braids, my tresses fair
That were my joy and pride,
And on my head, now shorn of hair,
A dirty rag they tied.
All jeered. E'en Jews spat in my face,
Although themselves despised.
Such were the ills I underwent
In life, my brother dear.
The people did not let me spend
In peace my youthful years,
They hounded me to death. I died
In winter by the road,
But in the spring time came alive
With petals white as snow,
A flower growing in the downs!
I brightened up the grove.
The previous winter ... oh my God!
The people, jeering, drove

Me from their midst. But in the
spring
With wonder and with love
They looked at me. My snow-white
blooms
The girls in garlands twined
And called me lily-of-the-snows;
And I began to thrive
In hot-houses and palace rooms
As well as I grew wild.
Oh flower-of-the-king, explain,
My brother dear, pray tell:
For what was I by God ordained
A flower here to dwell?
To please the very people who
Detested me and killed,
And killed my gentle mother too?
Dear God! Is that Your will?"
Again the Lily 'gan to weep.
The flower-of-the-king
With tenderness and pity deep
His head of rose-and-pink
Bent to the Lily's pallid face
And brushed her tearful cheek.

Kiev,
July 25, 1846

Translated
by John Weir

* * *

I care not if 'tis in Ukraine
Or far from her I live and die;
I care not if 'neath alien sky
Remembered or forgotten by
Her and her people I remain.
In slavery, midst alien folk
Grow up I did, and 'neath the yoke
Of slavery I'll die unmourned,
Far from the land that is our own
And yet is not—I'll leave fore'er
Our sweet Ukraine, and no trace there
Of me, an exile, will be left.
And father will not say to son:
"In prayer our voices let us lift
For one who suffered martyrdom
For our Ukraine...." I care not if
They ever pray for me or not,
To me this matters little.... But
If Evil lulls my hapless land
To sleep by ruse and cunning, and
She wakes in flames and robbed—if such,
As fear I, is to be her lot—
To me this matters ... very much.

In a prison cell,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

"Stay with your mother, maid!" they told you,
But you.... you left. For you in vain
She sought and waited: ne'er again
Was she, poor woman, to behold you!...
Long wept she, and in tears she died....
Where once you played, no sounds awaken
The shadows; empty and forsaken
The hut stands, no one comes inside;
The dog has run away, and under
The window, in the garden yonder,
The sheep by day graze, and at night
The owls hoot strangely; hid from sight
Beneath thick weeds, of waiting weary
For your return, a bed of bright
Flowers wilts; and in the wood, the cheery
Brook where you splashed is dry or nearly;
The trees look wistful with their bowed
And drooping branches, and the sound
Of woodbird's voice is stilled—the songster
Was it with you from here he went?...
Beside the stream, the willow bent
And shrivelled stands; the well, no longer
Used, rots away; the path you trod
With shrubs is overgrown.... O God!
Where have you flown, sweet maid? Where live
you?
In what far place do strangers give you,
Poor, stray soul, shelter? What man's home

Call you your own? And, maid, to whom
In joy and warm affection cling you?
To whom, I ask you, gladness bring you?
My heart it tells me that regret
You know not, that you idly linger
In sumptuous halls and do not let
Thoughts of the past intrude.... May sorrow
Know you nof e'er, nor a tomorrow
When 'gainst the Lord you will declaim
And curse your mother's blessed name.

In a prison cell,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

To N. Kostomarov[51]

The sun of spring in lightsome glee
Bathed in spring's gauzy clouds and airy;
The guards, in blue, a customary
Dark shade of blue, were changed, and we,
The jail's chained guests, politely, very,
Were served our morning mugs of tea.
I had grown used, I must admit it,
To doors with bolts and locks, and to
Small, narrow windows that no view
Of sky afforded and were fitted
With iron bars.... How very little
The copious and bloody tears
That weep I did in former years
Now meant to me.... They wet a bitter
And barren soil, and rise to no
Crops gave: not even rue would grow
Where fell they.... There was naught to bind me
To my old home; left far behind me
My parents were, dead were they both;
None wanted me, none waited for me....
Her face as dark as earth, before me
Your mother like a vision looms,
A martyr from the cross removed....
I praise thee, God, and with good reason:
I prayed, and thou didst hear my prayer—
With none will I be forced to share
These chains of mine and this my prison!

In a prison cell,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Beside the hut the cherries are in bloom,
And May bugs o'er them dance.... The peasants from
The field return with weary step.... 'Tis late....
The young maids as they go sing songs.... At home
The tables have been laid, and supper waits.

A family at table sit without....
Dusk slowly comes, the evening stars are out.
The daughter serves, but seems to take too long;
The mother is impatient and about
To scold, when lo!—a bird bursts into song.

The darkness cloaks the heavens overhead....
Beside the hut her little ones to bed
The mother puts, and then, afraid that they'll
Not sleep, lies down nearby.... The world seems dead;
All's still save for the maids and nightingale.

In a prison cell,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Hard is a captive's lot—aye, even
For one who never freedom knew.
A stranger's field I ploughed, 'tis true,
Yet 'twas a field, and now I'm driven
To such straits that as though 'twere Heaven,
So thirst I to embrace anew
That poor and wretched life.... A curse on
This foolish head of mine! No person
Of sense would let fools make a fool
Of him and in a dirty pool
His freedom drown.... O thought most hated!
What if to live my life out fated
Am I far from my native sod—
To live.... and love both men and God!

In a prison cell,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

THE PRINCESS

My Evening Star, rise in the sky
Above the mountain lofty,
And talk to me in my exile,
Quietly and softly.
Tell me how beyond that mountain
Crimson sunsets glow and fade,
How the rainbow dips for water
In the Dnieper far away,
How the poplars, tall and slender,
Throw their leafy branches wide,
How the willow droops in sadness,
Weeping by the river's side,
Arms spread wide upon the water—
In those green and tender arms
Little babies nightly rocking,
Babes that had not been baptised....
How the werewolf lurks till morning
By a lone, forgotten grave,
And the screech-owl wails its warning,
Grief and trouble to presage.
How the dream-flower in the valley
Opens in the summer night....
As for people.... Never mind them.
Them I know, I know all right.
Know them well. My Evening Star!
You're my one and only friend!
Ah, who knows how matters are
Now at home in our Ukraine?

I do know. And I will tell you,
Sleep tonight shall be forgot,
And tomorrow you shall whisper
Everything I've said to God.

Our village! It's a joy indeed
A village in Ukraine to see!
A painted Easter egg, no less,
White houses peep through trees in bloom,
And on the hill a mansion looms,
A perfect marvel. On all sides
Grow tall and stately poplar trees,
Then forests green, and rolling fields,
Beyond the Dnieper mountains rise,
And God seems smiling from the skies!

Ah, village mine! Those homes are gay!
The mansion, too, from far away—
May nettles choke the cursed place,
May from the earth it be erased,
So people never find its trace!
Once to this village, blest and fair,
In our Ukraine for beauty famed,
There came—I do not know from where—
A prince. With him his princess came.
They were not old, a youngish pair.
They lived in wealth, the owners sole
Of that great mansion on the knoll,
The shaded pool in the ravine,
The sloping gardens in between,
The poplars, too, and willow trees,
And wind mills flapping in the breeze,
And, following the river's bend,
Our village stretching without end.

Once 'twas a place of merriment.
In summer and in winter both

There would be music, wine would flow
In streams to slake the bibbers' drought.
The prince among his guests would ply,
Fill up the glasses of the shy,
And cheer them with a loud "Vivat!"
They'd shout and sing and drink some more,
Till they collapsed upon the floor.
Next morning they'd revive to start
Their round of revelry again,
And so it went on every day.
The prince's peasants moaned and groaned,
The stewards, meanwhile, blessed their lot.
The drunks, uncaring shouted on:
"Our glorious prince! The patriot!
Good brother to the poor! Vivat!"
This brother to the poor, whereat,
The poor man's daughter and his cow
Takes for his own. God doesn't know,
Or does, perhaps, but holds His peace.

The princess in her room he keeps,
The door is locked, he has the key,
This glorious prince. Where help to seek?
She ran away and married him,
Her parents' words she would not heed,
They said to her: "Don't reach so far,"
A prince she'd have. And there you are!
A princess now, to her distress.

You'll die, dear heart, in loneliness,
A primrose in the night in spring.
You'll wither 'ere you know a thing,
The Maker's praises how to sing,
How love can be a lovely thing....
O God, she wanted so to live,
She wanted to be loved and love,
If only for a year, an hour,
Move in the bright and splendid world.
'Twas not to be.... Yet she'd had all,
All things a mother could provide

Were by her mother given her.
In beauty rare she'd clothed her
child,
And like a painted saint you were,
To gaze upon and to adore....

Ah, my princess young and fair,
Heavy is my heart and sore!
You should live the Lord to bless,
Kindly deeds performing,
With your angel's loveliness
Hearts around you warming.
But alas! It seems your shining,
Starry eyes were fated
To grow dim in lonely pining.
Did the Lord dictate it?
Lord, O Lord! Both will and wisdom
On this earth to us you give,
Virtue, too, and also beauty....
But You will not let us live,
You won't let us long admire
This your earthly paradise,
Gaze our fill, say all our prayers
Ere in sleep we close our eyes.

It's dreary living in this world
If you have nobody to love.
My princess young, her fate unblest,
Seemed doomed to pine in loneliness,
Her beauty wilted, heart grown cold,
To perish slowly, comfortless.
An awful thought! She prayed the Lord,
To longer let her live implored,
For now she had someone to love:
She was to be a mother soon,
And loved the baby in her womb.
The Maker granted her to know
A woman's greatest happiness,
To see her child and kiss its face,

Her first-born tenderly caress,
And nurse the darling at her breast...
Oh children, by you we are blest!
How truly infinite God's grace!
Tears dried up, they were no more,
Radiantly shone the sun,
My young princess was transformed
Now she had her little one.
Born anew she seemed to be,
Gay and laughing happily.
For the lovely princess wee
Stitching tiny cambric vests
And embroidering the sleeves
With the finest silken threads.
And herself she bathed the girl,
Rocked and fed her at her breast,
Most great ladies in the world
Only bear their babies,
Nursing, bathing, and the rest
Being not for ladies!
Then they moan: "I've been forsaken
By my Paul!" or, say, Filat.
All you did for him was bear him,
Must he love you just for that?
My princess was a model mother,
Herself her little girl she reared,
She kept away her drunkard husband,
And never let him interfere.
Like a tender little stalk
Grew the baby in her care.
She had now begun to talk,
Mother taught her words to say,
"Mummy" was the word she taught,
As for "Daddy"—she did not...
Coloured picture books she bought
In the Romny village shop,
Told the baby fairy-tales,
Taught her how to say her prayers,
And her ABC in play
From those coloured pictures gay.

Every blessed night she bathed
And to sleep she rocked her babe,
Not a speck of dust she'd let
Fall upon the little saint.
Hovering o'er the baby's bed,
Wakefully the mother stayed,
With her tender, loving gaze
On the sweetly sleeping face,
Dreaming of the match she'd make
For the angel, bless her fate,
Sorrowing that when she wed
Her long hair she must unplait...
Here, the memory of her prince,
Drunk, in uniform arrayed,
Came to her. She closed her eyes,
Filled with bitter, scalding tears,
Baby murmured in her sleep
And the princess seemed to hear:
"Don't cry, Mummy dear, don't cry,
Don't unplait my long, long hair,
It is better in the braid...."
Ah, this child, so sweet and fair,
Made her mother's every day
Each a joyful holiday!
Tall and winsome like a poplar,
Miracle of beauty rare,
Grew the child... But not much longer
Was the princess to delight
In her fortune. For God punished
Our good saint. But why? But why?
For what sin? It puzzles people,
Worries them, for they don't know
Why does virtue die while evil
Ever comes alive once more?
The princess, ailing, took to bed.
This sobered up the husband.
To nearby villages he sped
And all the leeches summoned.
The leeches came. Her blood they drew,
And many remedies they tried.

They treated her with every cure,
Until the luckless princess died.

She was no more. And once again
The music rang in wild abandon.
An orphan, in the village stranded,
Her one and only child remained!
A winnowed leaf upon the ground,
A barefoot waif, uncared, unfed,
Her clothes in dirt and tattered shreds,
Out in the sun she stayed all day,
Dug in the sand and nibbled grass,
In puddles with the urchins played.
Dear heart, go bathe your face! Alas,
Your mother'd never know you now,
Her only child, among the crowd.
She'd think that you had died as well.
Go bathe your face so she could tell
The lovely child she left behind,
So she could bless and thank the Lord
For sending you this fortune kind.
She bathed her face. Some kindly friends
Took her to boarding-school in town,
In Kiev. And what happened then
We'll live and see.
The music rang,
The prince made merry, food galore,
The mansion shook with drunken roars,
While famine mowed the people down.

The famine was raging all over Ukraine.
God's punishment. Thousands to hunger succumbed,
While still in the ricks rotted noblemen's grain,
They even sold chaff to the merchants for gain.
They welcomed the famine and heavens they prayed
For only a couple more years of this dearth,
And then they'd show Paris and lands far away
What their sort of noblemen-farmers were worth!
And God was asleep. For indeed 'twould be strange
If He saw it all yet from anger refrained.

Or else He's too patient, too patient by
far....
"Believe ye and perish!" the prophets declaim.
But how to believe? By closing my eyes?
I'd like to believe, but my heart won't
comply.
The years went by, and many died
As famine raged throughout Ukraine.
Of prince's serfs it took its toll,
The hoarded grain had rotted all.
He drank and revelled as before,
Awaiting Jews to buy his stores
In vain... Again the corn grew tall,
The grateful people thanked the Lord,
And then the princess young was brought
From Kiev home. It was as though
The sun above the village rose.
Her mother's image she'd become
With hazel eyes and fine dark brows,
But she was always pensive, sad....
Why did she brood? Why did she frown?
Had she been born that way, perhaps?
Was it her nature to be glum?
Or could it be that her young heart
Already knew the pain of love
And separation? No, not that.
She had been like a swallow gay,
Untroubled in her Kiev school,
The whole wide world when she surveyed
By peeping from a nest secure,
Until the country destitute
On coming home she saw. 'Twas then
That she began to sigh and brood.

Like a gentle little dove
She flew about from home to home,
Everywhere she brought her love,
Called on all, saw everyone.
Some she cheered with kindly words,
And to others carried food.

She devoted all her days
To the needy, doing good,
Helping all. Her loving care
She gave orphans more than others,
Brought them home with her, and they
Called her mother, sainted mother.
All the village folk adored her,
And the Lord to keep her prayed....
In the meantime, to the prince
Jewish dealers came to trade,
And he gladly sold for cash
All he had of grain and chaff.
Out the peasants went to thrash,
Men whom famine had not claimed.
Strength, praise be, they still retained
Thrashing took them two-three hours,
Then they winnowed all the grain.
That same night a great carouse,
Celebrating his good yield,
Held the prince. They had their spree
In the grove, not in the house:
There his daughter lay asleep.

The noise, the yells, the songs obscene,
The drunken bawling! Tipsy jades
With bawdy laughter shrieked and screamed.
The host called out: "Let's merry be,
The while my daughter lies asleep!"

The daughter had not gone to sleep,
But locked fast in her darkened room
She gazed up at the crimson moon,
As it appeared from shadows deep
To glow above the mountains high
And stir them, fancied she, to life.
The oaks like silent ghosts came out
Into the open from the woods,
And then an owl without a sound
Flew to the field from 'neath the roof,
And frogs croaked loudly on the lawn....

Look on and marvel, feast your eyes
Upon God's starry world till dawn,
Upon the cloudless, peaceful skies...
Look on, while moonlight gives you warmth
And stars deny you sleep—look on!
Gazing at the splendid moonglow,
Well until the midnight hour,
Drooping low before the window,
Leaning sadly on her arm,
Sat my princess, watched the glowing....
Softly then began to cry,
Did her heart, perhaps, give warning
That her evil hour was nigh?
We can't know. She stemmed her tears,
Smiled a little smile—why weep?
Left the window, said her prayers,
And was very soon asleep.

The drunkards sprawled upon the ground
Amid their bottles. All were down,
Dead to the world. All but our host.
He drained his glass and went indoors.
He kept his feet, he did not fall.
His walk was steady. Dirty swine!
Where to? What's on your evil mind?
And treading softly on the floor
He turned the key, unlocked the door,
And stole up to his child. Wake up!
Wake up, pure dove, wake up, wake up!
And kill the snake before he bites!
Just kill him, God is on your side!
As Beatrice Cenci plunged her knife
And killed the Cardinal, her sire,
The Maker's punishment defying.
But no, she did not wake, she slept.
God saw it all but silent kept,
Condoning such atrocious acts....
No sound was heard. The minutes passed.
Then suddenly a shriek, a cry,

Then sobs that in the dark of night
But owls could hear. Then, not a stir,
No sound again. And all at once
The hayricks went up in a blaze.
The stars were dimmed. But not a word
Was heard, and not a voice was raised.
The nobles snored on unaware,
While crowds of people came and stared
As smoke to heaven wove its way....

The guests awoke next day at dawn,
That things were really bad they saw,
And promptly left the prince alone,
Without regret or second thought.
Thus let us leave the reprobate,
And God will, too, forsake him.
Only you won't be forsaken
Or released by wicked fate!
You crushed and broken little bloom!
Your father's sins to expiate
Forevermore you will be doomed.
Her father's sins! Oh wicked fate!
Oh cruel, oh relentless fate!
At least forsake her in old age,
Or even in a country strange,
Or in a wilderness. But nay,
You'll grimly follow everywhere,
You'll stalk her to her very grave,
You'll kill her and you'll bury her.

No one knew, none could explain
Where the princess could have gone.
Must have perished in the flames
On that night, thought everyone.

The village was in mourning plunged.
The lofty mansion on the hill—
The prince now deadly ill—looked glum.
He could not move, he was so ill,

But no one cared the prince to nurse,
And no one ever came to call
As he lay all alone and curst
In his dark and evil hall.
The village folk, recovering,
Together prayed and begged the Lord
To bring their princess back to them.
But nought of her was ever heard,
And she would never come again....
Where had she gone, where was she now?
She was a nun, she took the veil,
In holy Kiev made her vows.

To live and love she had been born,
A saint with loveliness divine
Above the sinful world to shine
And solace bring to everyone.
But fate ruled otherwise. A nun,
She'd waste away the years to come....

One day, my ramblings in Ukraine
Brought me to ancient Chihirin,
Where on the moor beyond the sands
A lonely monastery stands
With willow bushes overgrown.
And it was there that one old nun
Told me that once, some time ago,
A princess knocked upon their gate,
She'd come from somewhere far away
Beyond the Dnieper. Here she stayed
With them, and here she passed away.
"A woman still quite young she died,
And very beautiful besides.
The sun was hot, she'd walked for days,
It made her ill. And she grew worse,
She lingered for about three weeks,
And everything she told to us,
To Sister Xenia and me....

What pilgrimages she had made!
She had been nearly everywhere.
And here the poor soul passed away.
Her sacred grave is over there....
The cross has not as yet been placed...."

Orsk Fortress,
1847

Translated
by Olga Shartse

Nizhny Novgorod,
February 24, 1858

N. N.

Sunset.... The mountains lie sombre and shadowed,
Quiet the birds are and still are the meadows;
Evening brings calm, all rejoice, all are glad;
My heart alone is uneasy and sad....
Brimming with sorrow, it strains to reach distant,
Well-loved Ukraine.... For a magical instant
There does it stay and know blissful repose....
Dark are the mountains, a star plays and glows
Up in the heavens.... O star, star of even,
In the Ukraine, holy star, have you risen?
In the Ukraine have two sparkling brown eyes
Found you or by them unseen do you rise
And are forgot?... If forgot, then my only
Wish is that they never hear of my lonely
Fate, star, but sleep 'thout a look at the skies.

Orsk Fortress,
1847

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

N. N.[52]

I was thirteen. I herded lambs
Beyond the village on the lea.
The magic of the sun, perhaps,
Or what was it affected me?
I felt with joy all overcome,
As though with God....
The time for lunch had long passed by,
And still among the weeds I lay
And prayed to God.... I know not why
It was so pleasant then to pray
For me, an orphan peasant boy,
Or why such bliss so filled me there?
The sky seemed bright, the village fair,
The very lambs seemed to rejoice!
The sun's rays warmed but did not sear!
  But not for long the sun stayed kind,
  Not long in bliss I prayed....
  It turned into a ball of fire
  And set the world ablaze.
  As though just wakened up, I gaze:
  The hamlet's drab and poor,
  And God's blue heavens—even they
  Are glorious no more.
  A look upon the lambs I tend—
  Those lambs are not my own!
  I eye the hut wherein I dwell—
  I do not have a home!
  God gave me nothing, naught at all....

I bowed my head and wept
Such bitter tears.... And then a lass
Who had been sorting hemp
Not far from there, down by the path,
Heard my lament and came
Across the field to comfort me;
She spoke a soothing phrase
And gently dried my weeping eyes
And kissed my tear-wet face....
It was as though the sun had smiled,
As though all things on earth were mine,
My own ... the orchards, fields and groves!...
And, laughing merrily the while,
The master's lambs to drink we drove.

Oh, how disgusting!... Yet, when I
Recall those days, my heart is sore
That there my brief life's span the Lord
Did not grant me to live and die.
There, plowing, I'd have passed away,
With ignorance my life-long lot,
I'd not an outcast be today,
I'd not be cursing Man and God!...

Orsk Fortress,
1847

Translated
by John Weir

THE MONK[53]

Ah, those good old days in Kiev,
By the river, by the river!
Ah, those good old days in Kiev,
Gone forever, gone forever!
Gone forever—yet I'll wait for
Their return with hopeful spirit.
Let remembrance, O my brothers,
Sting my faithful heart and sear it.

Ah, those good old days in Kiev!
Brotherhood! No slaves, no lordlings!
Forth the Cossacks rode, defiant,
Dressed in jerkins red and golden.
For no man made way the Cossacks,
Merry lives the Cossacks led they.
Rich brocade and costly velvet
O'er the roads the Cossacks spread
they.

Near the Dnieper do the good lads,
Hearty lads and hale,
By the tub and pail, like water,
Wine pour out and ale.
They have bought up inns
and taverns,
And the barmaids too.
At the tables with their ladles
Bang away they do!

All around the townsfolk rollick,
Loud the music blares.
From the seminary windows,
Mute, the students stare.
They'd be glad to join the revels
If they only dared.
On the square a crowd now gathers....
What has drawn it there?

In pants of dark red satin clad,
So wide and full they sweep the street,
A Cossack, dancing, comes.... Egad!
The things old age can do! His feet
Raise clouds of dust.... The greybeard cuts
The wildest capers, then, with a shout—
"Now that is something like!"—sings out:

"Crayfish on the way, way!
What is there to say, say!
Let our wives sow poppies
While we cut the hay, hay!
Come, heels, dance and pound the earth,
Pound it, heels, for what you're worth!
Toes, you too will share their lot—
I will show you what is what!
At the earth, heels, pound away,
You have come to grief today.
Toes, you too will share their lot,
I will show you what is what!"

To the Cossack Cloister, dancing,
Went he, and behind him
Came his friends and all of Kiev,
And a long and winding
Train they made.... The gateway reaching,
Cried he: "Open, brothers!
From the Sich I come, a Cossack
Am I and no other!"
Silently the gate swung open,
Silent closed behind him.
For all time the world and all its

Comforts he abandoned.
Semyon Paliy, such his name was,
Oft was it repeated.
Grief had left the man unbeaten,
Hardship undefeated.

In the morn the red sun rises,
And it sets of even.
Robed in black, a monk walks, pensive,
By his dark thoughts driven,
Up and down his cell.... Or, eager
For a sight of Kiev,
To a nearby hilly village
Goes, and there with heaving
Breast sits silent, gazing sadly
On the town and grieving,
Of his past life's sorrows thinking....
Then, the hilltop leaving,
At a well he stops for water....
In his cell, confined by
Walls of stone, his youth recalls he,
For those far years pines he.
Oft the Holy Book our recluse
Takes and oft he reads it—
But his thoughts are apt to wander,
Far away they lead him.

God's sacred words are stilled, they die,
And lo!—the Sich and Cossack glory
Revive.... The aged Hetman's eye,[54]
Round as an owl's, through his bores.... Sly
And sharp his gaze is.... Ah, how merry
The dancing is! The tunes—how airy!...
Berdichev,[55] Moscow's lowering sky,
And many roads, and clanging chains,
Siberia's great snowy plains,
The Yenisei....[56] Onto his cassock
The tears rain....
Bow and kneel, and lie
Before your God, and mortify

Your flesh, and read the Scriptures, Cossack!
And heed the bell.... Don't listen to
Your simple heart: it fooled and bled you
And to Siberia it led you.
Forget Borzná, and Fástov too,[57]
And lull your heart to sleep.... A guest of
This earth you are, and like the rest of
Mankind, will rot, and none will know
What anguish suffered you....
A low
Moan from the monk comes.... He is
weeping,
He rises, sits, he walks the cell,
His soul by troubled thinking weighted.
"O God," he cries, "why was I fated
To love my native land so well?..."

To Matins calls the great bell.... Startled,
Himself he crosses, takes his plain
Black beads and heavy staff, then, partly
Still wrapt in thought, sighs yet again,
Puts on his cowl, and, heavy-hearted,
Limps off to pray for the Ukraine.

Orsk Fortress, 1847
Moscow, 1858

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

THE OUTLAW

Upon my wand'rings far from home
Down Yelek way I came across
A countryman. An old, old man,
A tortured convict with a brand
Upon his brow. One Sunday 'twas
I met him walking all alone
Across a field. We 'gan to talk.
His blessed Volyn he recalled,
His youth when he was free and bold,
His life entire. We sat and talked
Behind a rise out in the field,
Each told his past, our sins revealed
To one another. "Ah, that's life,"
He said to me. "It's all God's will.
God's will! What man can do is nil,
For all his vain and foolish strife!
Just look at me, myself I wrecked,
Myself I ruined my whole life.
But I blame no one, neither help
Nor sympathy do I expect.
I ask for nothing. Thus I'll die,
My son, my one and only friend,
Away from home in this strange land,
An outlaw." And the convict sighed
And dropped a tear. Oh, brother mine!
While there is hope don't let it die,
Let it remain, don't drive it out,
And let it warm your home betimes,
The chilly walls will slowly thaw

And from your old and weary eyes
Your pent-up tears will freely pour.
These youthful tears will purify
And ease your aching, tortured heart,
And like a bird from foreign climes
Home it will fly, to native parts.

"So much is gone," he said to me,
"No little water to the sea
The Ikva's carried in these years....
There was a village by the stream,
'Twas in that village to my sad
And sorry lot that I grew up.
Oh, what a bitter, bitter cup!...
Our lady of the manor had
Two little sons, both of my age,
She took me in to be their page,
It really meant that for those lads
I was a sort of whipping boy.
The years went by and those two grew
Like savage pups, and many knew
Their vicious bite, not only I.
When tutors came I studied too
All they were taught, and paid the cost
With tears, with blood itself, because
How dare we learn, slaves that we are,
Much cheaper than the master's dog?
We'd dare to read?!
Just pray to God,
And meekly trudge behind the plough.
And that is all. The peasant's lot.
That's all a serf's supposed to know,
Such is his sorry destiny.
My studies finished, boyhood done,
I begged the mistress set me free.
But no, she would not let me go,
Nor to the army would agree
To send me. What was I to do?
All that remained for me—the plough....
While her own sons, the lordlings two,

Enrolled in the Imperial Guards.
The years ahead were grim and hard,
Years full of grief and bitter woe.
I plodded on behind the plough,
I had no folks, at all you know.
A servant girl the neighbour had,
He'd brought her up. And I, and I....
Oh fate, that awful fate of mine!
She was a child, a child, no more,
She was.... But no, Thy ways divine,
Are not for us to judge, O Lord!
So to my ruin she grew up,
For evil was my fate's design.
Our love, alas, was not to be,
I thought that she would marry me,
We'd live in joy and happiness,
The people and the Lord to bless!
What came to pass....
A lot of food
Was cooked, and ale was brewed,
But never served our wedding guests.
Our lady's spouse, that ageing stud,
Ransacked our stores and spilled the ale,
Seduced my girl, made sport of her....
'Twas long ago, so why describe
Or recollect. I'll say no more.
It's over, finished, done with, gone...
I left the fields, I left my home,
I left the village and my plough,
My all. The devil prompted me
To go to town and be a scribe.
And so a year went by somehow.
I scribed in town, good friends I made,
And picked a gang of trusty blades.
Another year went by. At last,
The two young masters came to stay.
Both were engaged. The days they passed
In feasting, cards and other play,
Carousing ere their wedding-day.
They pounced on every village lass

Like two young bulls. You know the way
Of gentlemen. We waited too.
We waited for their wedding-day.
Came Trinity at last, and they
Those fine and noble brides and grooms
Were wedded in their private church,
For they were Poles. You'd have to
search
The world to find their match in looks.
The Lord himself had never yet
Seen bridal couples fair as they.
And then the band began to play,
The couples from the church were led
To their apartments where we lay
In wait for them. We stabbed them dead,
Those masters, princelings, newlyweds.
We killed them all. Their wedding gay
Became a bloodbath. None escaped,
No Catholic remained unscathed.
All swam in gore, in stinking slime,
Like slaughtered pigs. Our business
done,
We started out for us to find
A new abode, a home our own.
And find we did, in green confines
Of forest dark and gullies deep,
In rolling fields, on hillsides
steep,
In spreading meadows. All was home,
With room to give ourselves some fun,
But never to relax or sleep.
The gang elected me their head,
My Fam'ly grew by days and hours,
Close on a hundred men I led.
Blood flowed as freely as a sow's,
I murdered all of masters bred,
By neither wrath nor pity roused.
I simply slaughtered. Can't explain
Myself what drove me on and on.
A full three years I used my knives,

A drunken butcher, that was me.
I got quite used to weeping wives,
To blood, to fires, to everything.
I'd spike a baby like a toad
And roast it o'er a blazing fire.
Or catch a lady, strip her clothes,
Then to a horse's back I'd tie her
And send her flying through the
steppe... .
All that we did and even more,
Till I grew sick of it and tired....

Hiding out became a torment,
I felt spent, down in the mouth,
And to cut my throat I wanted,
Not to drag the misery out.
But a miracle so wondrous
Was to happen to me then,
Me, too vile to be called human....
Dawn was breaking as I came
Out of darksome Brovar' forest,
In my boot my trusty knife
For the deed and, startled, halted:
There, up in the roseate sky
Holy Kiev seemed suspended.
Golden domes appeared alight,
Bathed in awesome glory splendid,
Talking with the Lord on high.
Moved to tears, I gazed astound.
Tolling Kiev bells I heard,
Heaven-born the gentle sound.
O my Lord, my Lord, my Lord!
Thou art marvellous! I wept.
Overwhelmed, I stood and wept....
And there welled up in my breast
Such relief! Away was swept
All despair, all my distress.
Like a man reborn I breathed.
Once again I looked at Kiev,
Crossed myself three times and then

Slowly there my way I wended—
There to pray at ancient shrines,
And to face the people's verdict,
Beg them judge me for my crimes.

Orsk Fortress, 1848
St. Petersburg, 1858

Translated
by Olga Shartse

KINGS

If you, Apollo's agéd sister,[58]
As was your wont in ancient days,
Should chance to visit us and stay
To lift your godly voice and utter
A grand and lofty ode, I may
My modest self be sorely tempted,
Though from such tedious rite exempted,
To sing the praises of the tsars,
For I admit to you that, far
From being pleased with, I am weary
Of all my poor, dishonoured maids,
My lords and peasants, and would fain,
No more of word or sentence chary,
Pour out my boredom and disgust
And write of tsars and reigning princes,
By God anointed.... So intense is
My nausea that write I must....
Teach me to pluck them, and the chances
Are that I'll flay these most august
And honoured folk of skin and feathers....
So leave Parnassus and descend
To earth, I beg you, ancient mother,
And let your feeble voice ascend
To saintly heights.... Let us together
To caesars and such like attend,
And for a worthy moment bend
Our efforts to the task of peeling
Their mantles off and so revealing

The sorry contents.... Come, dear friend,
Begin, no part of truth concealing.

I

Jerusalem lies hushed and nigh deserted,
Its gates are bolted.... Is't the plague
that holds
The city in its grip?... Nay, worse....
'Tis parted
From God's own mercy, ne'er before withheld.
War has King David in his wisdom started,
And Israel is orphaned, and it bleeds!
The whole of Israel's weakly host,
Young, beardless lads included, all
Its manhood rally to the call,
The princes too.... No time is lost;
They lock away the scrolls and haste
To fight King David's foe and leave
Their children fatherless.... The town
Is still and empty, save alone
For fair young widows who do grieve
To see their helpless orphaned babes,
And curse the prophet king.... Meanwhile,
He walks, does David, with a smile
Upon the palace roof, in robes
Of crimson clad, and lets his eye,
As oily as a cat's when lard
Lies within reach, with soft regard
Stray o'er the house of neighbourly
Uriah.... In the garden there
He sees the lovely form and bare
Of Uriah's beauteous partner,
Bathsheba by name,
Who is bathing by a fountain,
Lost, like Eve, to shame.
She caresses now her bosom,
Now her milk-white arms,
And the sovereign falls a victim
To her earthly charms.

Dusk has descended, fitful sleep embraces
Jerusalem.... Within his palace hid,
King David (how his eye lascivious blazes!)
The royal chambers in a frenzy paces
And whispers hoarsely: "I... Nay, *we* so bid!
I am the ruler of this land,
The chosen people's God and king,
Their all in all!" At his command
The slaves a bounteous supper bring
And wine to cheer him in the night.
He next instructs them to invite
Uriah's spouse.... Aside she flings,
Does Bathsheba, convention's stays,
And comes, as she was bid, to grace
The monarch's board.... With him she
whiles
Full many an hour away, is dined
And wined, slave though she is, in style,
And later shares the prophet's bed
With sweet compliance....
And the poor,
Betrayed Uriah calmly sleeps
And never knows that in the deep
Of night the wily king has lured
His wife from him, has robbed him of
The one possession that above
All else he holds.... And to ensure
That it may never reach his ear
What does the king but engineer
Uriah's speedy death.... His tears
And words of penitence deceive
Old Nathan, and as drunk and gay
As ever, David spends his days
In revels with his lovely slave.
So do the saintly rulers live!
As for the others, who can know!...
I counsel you not to inquire,
(To stay in ignorance entire)
Lest it should bring you
needless woe.

II

King David's piety was not
Extreme.... Like many saints, a son
And daughter too he had begot.
In this, as most of you will own,
There's nothing very strange.... But stay!
I'll tell you all, and then you may
Judge for yourselves.... A handsome one
Was Amnon, David's son.... To see
So blithe and sweet a youth as he
Take of a sudden to his bed
Rends David's heart.... He strews his head
With ashes, tears his crimson gown,
And weeps to hear poor Amnon moan.
"My son!" he cries, "Limb of my limb!
My heart is sore, my sight bedimmed....
Do not thy father's plea deny,
Leave thou not me, or I must die!"
And with a cry he runs to him
Or hobbles, rather. And Amnon lies,
Strong as a bull and just as sound,
Stretched on his couch, and groans aloud,
And heaves the most despondent sighs,
And, laughing up his sleeve, implores
The king to let his most adored,
His lovely sister Tamar come
And visit him.... With streaming eyes
So does he speak: "O thou most wise
And gracious king, I am become
Weak, and am plunged in awful gloom....
Let Tamar bake a cake for me
And bring it here, for then, 'tmay be,
I shall be healed...." And Tamar from
Her chamber to her brother's hastes,
Come morning, and with her she takes
A cake that she herself has baked.
He forthwith grabs her by the waist
And forces her onto the bed.
Poor Tamar cries: "My brother, led

Art thou by evil.... Mercy!... Spare
Thy sister own!..." She wrings her hands
And cries again: "By God and man
Wilt thou be curs't, and I shall ne'er
Live down my shame....
Stay thou thy lust....
Come, let me be!..." But, sad to tell,
This he will not. So do the princes,
The just, the wondrous wise, the puissant,
In truth, like to amuse themselves....
Good people, mark it well!

III

King David reached a vast old age,
Like many a sage,
But ran to seed and so declined
That though they heaped his robes on him
The lecher shivered still and pined
For warmth in every bone and limb.
His slaves and lackeys then opined
(His wolfish nature well they knew)
That nothing else was there to do
But find some young and lovely maids
To keep him warm.... A bevy soon
Is 'fore his senile gaze displayed....
The slaves withdraw, the old buffoon
Having been served and thus obeyed.

Licks his lips, does old King David,
And by lust possessed,
Slobbering, his hands he stretches
Toward the loveliest
Of them all—a lily tender
As the morning bright,
Abishag, a sweet-faced virgin,
Born a Shummanite.
With her body does she warm him
While the others play
Noisy games, and, stripped of raiment,

Wax uncommon gay.
How she warmed her senile ruler
I, forsooth, know not,
I but know that though she warmed him,
He ... he knew her not.

IV

Prince Rogvolod,[59] a jolly old soul,
Strolls o'er his courtyard with measured gait,
While, standing near, his henchmen wait,
And too his warriors, in gold
And shining silver clad.... They all
Expect the prince, Rogneda's groom,
And in his honour hold a fête....

'Fore Lel and Lado, godheads two,
Rogneda lights a fire; the flames
Lick at the oil, a strong perfume
Of incense fills the air.... Like true
Valkyrias, around the fire
Rogneda's lovely playmates dance
And chant this song:

Ho, flames, leap higher,
We do so desire
To add full measure
To our guests' pleasure.

Beyond the town of Polotsk rise
Thick clouds of dust. Both young and old
Go forth in haste to meet the prince,
Rogneda's wooer.... And there, behold,
Is Rogvolod, and with him fair
Rogneda, mid the welcomers.
Toward them comes, alas, not Lithuania's prince,
He Rogneda chose for to be her mate.
With his men-at-arms, like a savage boar,

Like a maddened boar or an aurochs fierce,
Prince Volodimir[60] comes of Kiev-town.
Not to woo he comes, but to hunt and slay.
The town, by walls and ramparts bounded,
Is by the enemy surrounded
And set afire.... Old Rogvolod
Is put to death.... Rogneda's led,
In chains, to Kiev with the rest,
And there deflowered.... At the behest
Of Kiev's ruler she's sent to roam
The world, forsaken and alone,
Poor maid.... Sad is her plight.... For who
Is there to help her?... None!... So do
Disport themselves our reverenced tsars,
They that by God appointed are
To rule on earth.

V

May they be hanged, the bloody butchers,
And cursed!... A most unholy fuss
Over these sceptre-wielding wretches
Is made, methinks.... One's at a loss
How best to deal with them, or even
How to approach them.... I am driven
To seek your counsel... Tell me, now,
Apollo's sister, O most civil
And courteous of ladies, how,
Think you, am I to learn to grovel
Before the throne?... For Easter day,
If but some coppers come my way,
I'll buy you, lass, a necklace.... Truly,
Let's put our minds to it, and coolly
Turn into lackeys, you and I,
And serve the tsars until we die....
But stay!... 'Tis waste of ink and paper
So to go on.... Good cannot prosper

Where freedom is in fetters.... We
Shall to the village, O my goddess,
Repair, where men reside in goodness.
Amongst them we in peace shall live,
And to the Lord our praises give.

Kos-Aral, 1848;
St. Petersburg (?), 1858

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Had we two met again, our meeting
Would it have frightened you or not?
Would you a gentle word in greeting
Have murmured?... No, all is forgot
By you, I wot; you'd not have known me,
Or if you had, you would have shown me
By casual word or nod that what
Once was was nothing but a fleeting
Dream.... As for me, my poor heart beating
With joy, I would have wept, yes, wept
To see you, dear one, and recall those
Young days and gay and bitter, all those
Delightful days, by memory swept
From sight.... I'd God have thanked
for making
Of what was magical and sacred
A something fast dissolved in tears,
A dream doomed quick to disappear....

Kos-Aral,
1848

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

MARINA

A stabbing nail within the heart—
So is Marina unto me.
I durst not earlier impart
Her story lest they say I lie
And take the poor lost sinner's part
To vent my hate and enmity
For all that snarling pack of curs,
The gentlefolk; they'd dub me churl,
Boor, canting fool and knave,
A serf from birth and to his grave.
But nay, I lie not, as God seeth,
That I'm no lord 'thout shame declare.
'Tis you I blush to look upon,
You that enlightened Christians are.

. . . . . .

A wild beast e'en could not have done
That which, while piously
Mumbling your prayers on bended knee,
You visit on your brothers own....
Your laws
Were writ by butchers; but this did cause
No pangs amongst you. Just in case,
To be absolved of sin you haste
To Kiev, to see an anchorite....
But why do I complain?
Truly, neither good nor evil
Can I feel again....
And to him of hardened spirit

This will give no pain.
So, my muse, my friend in sorrow,
Fly from the Ukraine,
From my sweet Ukraine, my mother,
Come ye flying nigh,
And to me of poor Marina
Speak with muffled sigh.
Tell me how the well-born villain
Dealt with her, but, pray,
In a whisper speak lest strangers
Overhear and say
That we rob and burn and pillage,
That we're shriftless scum—
Even farther we'll then be banished,
Nigh to kingdom come.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . Not long ago, as I did hear,
A village wedding was held; the cheer
Was general, and mirth ran high.
Just then the lord came driving by,
Home on his way from church; he may
Have been the steward, I cannot say.
Such was the gaiety that none
Did see the Pole as quickly on
He drove.... But keen, alas,
Was he of sight, and on the lass,
The bride, so rosy-cheeked and fair,
His roving, lustful eye did light.
Oh, why does Heaven spare
Such demons in human form!... Not quite
Two years had passed since he arrived,
Bringing his German ploughs, the fiend....
And he, he shames young maids and sires
Unhappy bastards that know not friend
Or home.... This man of low design
Was wed, and father to
Two children—angels two.
Out walking with their mother, as fine

A youthful matron as one may meet,
They were when up he drove and sent
For the bridegroom.... Then, his partner
sweet
Coming close, he kiss'd her thrice; content,
The children crowded round to greet
Their parent, and together they
Made for the house.... Quick to obey,
The servants ushered in the groom.
(To army servitude for life
No sooner wed is he than doomed!)
Poor wretch, he's parted from his wife,
And off to town they carry him,
Where in obedience to a whim,
He's made a soldier.... So do we
With human lives make free!
As for the bride, is she to spend
Her life a spinster, though so young
And lovely?... Is it Heaven's intent,
Now that her wedded bliss has gone
Like so much smoke, and all's undone
That was to be, to make her toil
In the master's field?... Oh no,
the spoil
She now becomes of the lord, is call'd
Marysia, in the Polish style,
And not Marina, and is install'd
In the lord's own manor house; to smile
They order her, but she—she weeps,
And faithful to her yokel keeps,
The silly wench.... If she were wise
She'd know she was in paradise!...
She need but ask for this or that,
And 'twill be hers, and richly served,
Little as she such things deserves.
But no, all that she does is prate
Of going back to her lowly hut.
And this, when like a puffed-up cock
The lord himself around her struts!...
Marina, nay, by hook or crook,

But he will make you his.... Comply,
Or else go hang yourself and die!...

To the lord, her mother
Came to beg for mercy,
But his henchmen sent her
Off with threats and cursing.
With her heart nigh bursting
She staggered off.... Her only child
Was lost.... Aye, she was shamed, defiled,
Proud, sweet-faced Marina! ...

. . . . . .

Much like a raven that soars on high
Predicting rain with raucous cry,
So of the grief I speak and woe
Of those poor souls on whom a sigh,
In truth, none but myself bestow.
The wretches are denied
The solace of pity e'en.... Accord
My words a sacred strength, o Lord,
That they may pierce men's hearts and wring
Tears from their eyes, aye, tears, whose sting
Melts callous spirits; that they may
Teach them compassion's voice to hear
And with my own deep sorrow sear
Their souls.... Along thy righteous way
That they their faltering steps may guide,
And fill their hearts with love and pride
For such as are their fellows....
Home
Marina's mother, weary, came;
The hut was empty.... On the sill
Stood flowers in pots, the whitewashed wall
Was gay with crosses daubed thereon
Most prettily.... But she was gone
Whose busy hands had so transformed
The room's dull drabness.... And a storm
Of weeping shook the mother's frame;
She stumbled out, Marina's name

Repeating loudly; climbed a hill
That overlooked the house where poor
Marina languished, and whose door
Was barred to her; then, knowing ill
Why so she did, went down the road
That led her to the cursed abode,
And to the ground, her strength now failing,
Sank, there to weep beside the paling
All night.... The shepherds with their herds
Passed by, the sun arose, and evening
Descended fast.... She never stirred....
They beat her, set the dogs on her—
To no avail!...

Like a nun, in white apparelled,
Locked away from sight,
In her lonely room, Marina
Sits from morn till night.
There she sits, and to her Maker
Prays with streaming eyes,
While the lordling waits upon her
And to tempt her tries
With, perhaps, a toothsome dainty,
Wine, a sweet, but no—
She declines, she does not even
Glance his way.... He grows
Livid in his rage, the villain,
To be thus defied.
Summer passes into winter,
But encased in pride
Is Marina still.... The steward
Fumes, but she is proof
'Gainst his courting, and is wasting
'Neath the friendless roof.
Silent is she now, no longer
Weeps, her tears have dried.
But the lordling, he is helpless,
For she'd rather die
Than give in.... One winter evening
All alone she sat,

Gazing darkly out the window
At the forest lit
By a tub-shaped moon that, crimson,
Moved across the sky.
Said Marina in a whisper:
"Young and bright was I
As the moon, but now—" And, sighing,
She began to sing:

'Tis a rich house, it is,
Guests come when they please.
Her plait they unbind,
And the ribbons undo,
And the lord asks for lard
And the devil for stew,
And the screeching geese
Fly beyond the blue seas
Where the earth meets the sky, the sky!

Out in the yard, a hue and cry
The whips start up; a frenzied barking
Comes from the dogs.... Red-faced and shaking
With fury, like a drunken brigand,
The lord hastes to Marina....
Feeling
The cold wind not, beside the paling
Her mother sits as by a hearth,
The crazy hag, and this despite
The crackling frost that numbs the earth.
The moon has turned from red to white;
The watchman hoarsely calls the hour
For fear he wake the lord; the bower
Which is Marina's suddenly
Bursts into flame.... Fire! Fire!... And see—
A crowd collects, as if they'd sprung
From out the earth.... Both old and young
Come running nigh from every side,
Like waves, a surging, mounting tide,
To watch the eerie sight.... For there,
Seen clearly in the fiery glare,

Beside the house Marina dances,
Stark naked, with her mother, and
A bloody knife clasped in one hand,
Her ballad chants:

Is it not you, my beauty,
All dressed up to look pretty?...
I'm a lady, and wear
A lady-like air.
The lords court and woo me.
Great honour they do me.

(To her mother)

"Come you, my mother, from the grave
To see me wedded?... Fie!...
My plaits they did unbind when he,
The lord arrived.... Honk! Honk!... What have
We here?.... Geese, think you?... Nay,
The gentry, for I know they crave
A warmer clime.... Honk!... See?—Away
To Satan's own domain they fly.
The bells are tolling. Hear them?... Fire!...
The bells of Kiev.... But the lord
Lies reading... Wait... He pulls the cord,
He wants a drink.... You know that I
Have slit his throat?... Look yonder.... He
Is perched atop the chimney.... Aye,
Charred as a log.... Scat! Leave me be,
Me and my mother.... Don't you drool,
Here, stuff yourself and choke, you ghoul!"

(Makes a "fig" and sings)

To the Lord I swear above,
A Muscovy lad I love!
The Muscovy lad is smart,
He'll bring a gown and steal a heart.
A lordling's no worse,
He comes with a purse,
And the son of a priest
With a necklace, at least!
Ring, bells, ring loud,

Disperse the clouds!
Let the Tatars have rain
Again and again,
And all Christians true,
Bright skies and blue.
Ring, bells, ring loud!

MOTHER

Marina, sweet, 'tis time for bed.

MARINA

Aye, so it is.... Tomorrow we
Must early be in church.... But see—
He's after me, his arms outspread.
Take that, you fiend!

MOTHER

Let's off to bed!
(To the crowd)
Help! She's undone, good folk. Alack!...

MARINA

Come, tie my hands behind my back,
Come, seize me, lead me to the lord!...
And you, my mother, your adored,
Your own Marina—care you not
To see her?... In yon chamber she,
A captive, sits.... Sad is her lot;
She wilts, she dies, by all forgot,
Poor, poor Marina...."
(Sings)
Grey geese, honk-honk!
To the Danube fly.
My hair's bound up,
And I sit and sigh.

The birds are gay and free of care,
The birds, they wheel and sport on high,
And I... I'm held a prisoner.

(Weeps)

O, for a necklace! With it I
Could hang myself. What else is there
To do?... I have it—drown!... Now, now,
Weep not, dear heart, I beg you, spare
Your poor Marina. Dark of brow,
She stands beside you.... Do not make
Her cry....Oh! Oh! Look there—a snake
Is coiling towards us o'er the snow....
It's black as pitch.... Away I'll go
To southern lands, for am I not
A cuckoo-bird!... Why won't he spend
His furlough here?... Dear God!...
The war....
They killed him, aye.... But listen, for
I had the strangest dream.... The moon
Shone bright above us; on the dunes,
Beside the sea, together we
Were strolling. Suddenly the stars
Began to drop, one after one,
Into the water. There remained
But one up in the sky.... Alone
I found myself, and clad, as are
The poor, in rags. I was trying
to wade
Across the Danube with a babe,
A bastard, in my arms. They leered
At me, and mocked and jeered,
And called me trollop and witless jade.
You too were grinning. As for me,
I wept.... Nay, laughed.... For I was
free
To fly.... An owl am I.... Look! Look!..."

And, waving her arms as if they were
A pair of wings, away she ran
With howl the like of which no man
But only beast of prey can utter.
And after her her agéd mother
Went hobbling. Baked to death like pigs
Were all the lords, the house burnt down.

In silence did the lookers-on
Disperse. Of poor Marina naught
Was heard or seen.... In early spring
Two corpses in the field were found,
And buried there, high on a mound.

Kos-Aral,
1848

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Thick, torpid waves, skies dull
and sightless....
On shores that wear a veil of haze,
Tall reeds, though no wind with them plays,
Sway as if drunk. O God Almighty!
Beside this wretched sea and far,
In this lone prison without bars,
Am I intended long to languish
In endless pain and endless anguish?...
As if alive, the parched and dry
Grass stirs, but, mute, makes no reply....
'Twill not disclose the truth, alas,
And there is no one else to ask!

Kos-Aral,
1848

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Young masters, if you only knew
How people weep there all life through,
You'd not compose your rhapsodies,
And God for nothing you'd not praise,
Nor mock our tears by twisting truth.
That tranquil cottage in the grove
You call a paradise—I know.
In such a cottage once I dwelt,
'Twas there my first hot tears were spilt,
My early tears! I know no vice,
No wrong or ill, however rare,
That's not found in that cottage fair....
And yet they call it paradise!

I do not call that little house
In a small village, by a copse,
A very paradise on earth.
'Twas there my mother gave me birth
And, singing as her child she nursed,
She passed her pain to me.... 'Twas there,
In that wee house, that Eden fair,
That I saw hell.... There people slave
Without a let-up night and day,
Not even having time to pray.
In that same village to her grave
My gentle mother, young in years,
Was laid by toil and want and cares.
There father, weeping with his brood
(We were but tiny, tattered tots),

Could not withstand his bitter lot
And died at work in servitude!...
And we—we scattered where we could
Like little field mice. I to school—
To carry water for the class.
My brothers slaved on the estate
And then, conscripted, marched away!
And you, my sisters! Fortune has
Reserved for you the cruellest fate!
What is the purpose of your life?
Your youth in service slipped away,
Your locks in servitude turn grey,
In service, sisters, you will die!

My blood runs cold when I recall
That cottage in the village fair!
Such deeds, O God, do we do there
Where piety rules over all
And all in paradise should dwell!
Of heaven we have made a hell,
Yet for another heaven call.
We with our brothers live in peace,
We with our brothers plough the fields,
And water them with brothers' tears.
And also, maybe.... Nay, I fear,
But so it seems.... perhaps, O God
(Because without Thy will divine
We'd not in nakedness repine
In paradise), perhaps You mock
Us also, Father, from the sky
And with the masters You conspire
On how to rule us here below.
For look: there smiles a verdant grove,
And from behind the grove a pool
Peeps shyly out, behind it stands
A row of willows washing hands,
Their branches, in the waters cool....
Is this not truly paradise?
Look once again until your eyes
See what has made this heaven cruel!

Will you see gladness, hear but praise
Of God for all that He has done,
For all the marvels He has made?
No, not a bit! There's praise for none!
Just blasphemy and blood and wails—
All things are curst, all is blasphemed!
There's nothing sacred left on earth....
And even Thee, it seems to me,
The people have already cursed!

Orenburg,
1850

Translated
by John Weir

THE HALF-WIT[61]

'Twas in Tsar Sergeant-Major's[62] reign
That close-cropped Corporal One-Arm
And drink-besotted Long-of-Arm,[63]
Two N.C.O.s, ruled the Ukraine.
They did things grandly, truth to tell.
They robbed the people very well,
Those non-commissioned satraps twain,
One-Arm especially excelled
With his lance-corp'ral's[64] help—that lad
Was lively, vicious, wholly bad.
They drilled the folks such wondrous ways
The Sergeant-Major were amazed
To see such drills, and very glad,
And told the N.C.O.s "our praise
And favour" at all times they had.
While we in craven silence gazed
Like dummies, only scratched our pates.
Oh fawning, cringing, dastard slaves,[65]
The footstools of the tsar and tools
Of the drunk corporal! Ye aides
And lackeys of the men who rule,
Informers, philistines, not you
For truth and freedom can arise.
Not how to love, but crucify
Your brothers is your venal creed!
Oh treacherous, accursed breed,
When will you pass? When will we greet
Our own George Washington at last

With the new law of righteousness?
Oh, there's no doubt that day we'll see!
Not hundreds, millions of you,
Sons of the ancient Slavic tribes
Of the Ukraine, the corp'ral ruled;
And you, my blessed Kievites,
With your neat women-folk were nought
But servants at the beck and call
Of his drunk latrine-cleaning squads.
You didn't seem to mind at all.
And yet among you one queer duck,
One freak was found in all the lot,
Who smashed the satrap in the mug—
Right in the church—a hefty slug,
And there it ended.
Then you, fools, should have risen too
To fight against him—ah, but you....
You were afraid....
That was the case!
Among a million swineherds base
There proved to be one Cossack true
Who set the empire all abuzz:
He gave the satrap's snout a bust.
And then what did you, half-wits, do?
While yet the corp'ral lay abed,
The saintly knight, who laid him there,
To be a half-wit you declared!
The tyrant Sergeant-Major sent
The saint to penal servitude;
And said with great solicitude
That he his battered satrap old
"Eternally" with favour viewed.
And nothing else at all transpired!
By back lanes to the garbage pile
They took the drama. Well, and I...
My shining star! My steps you guide
From prison and from exile far
Straight to the cesspool of the tsar,[66]
And shine upon it, glowing bright
With an unearthly, holy light—

Life-giving light, and from the cess
His godless acts of wickedness
Rise up before me row....
Oh tsar of wickedness and woe,
And persecutor of the right!
Oh, what you've done upon the earth!
And as for You, All-Seeing Eye![67]
As You looked down, did You not spy
How throngs of saints[68] in chains they
drove
Into Siberia's frozen wastes,
How tortured them 'mid ice and snow,
And crucified! You did not know?
On all those doings You could gaze
And not be blinded?! Eye, O Eye!
You don't see deep, though look from
high!
You sleep in icons, while the tsars....
But faugh on them, the rulers base!
May they be haunted by those chains,
While I fly to Siberia, far
Beyond the Lake Baikal; and there
Into the mountain dungeon lairs
And pits abysmal I will probe,
And I'll lead out, encased in chains,
The saints, who freedom's cause maintain,
Into the light of day, to show
To tsars and people—a parade
Of endless columns, clanking chains....

Nizhny Novgorod,
1857

Translated
by John Weir

A DREAM

Out in the field she laboured, reaping
The master's wheat; then, wearied, went
To where she'd left her baby sleeping
Beside a stack. O'er him she bent
And cradled in her arms the crying
And whimpering bundle. Lovingly
She changed and fed him, pacifying
Her son with lullaby. When he
Slept, on her knee untroubled lying,
She dozed, and in her dream she saw
Ivan, her son, a babe no longer,
But fully grown. Tall, handsome, strong he
And rich appeared, a man; what's more,
A free man, not a serf, and wedded
To one free like himself. Attended
By wife and children, in the field,
His own, he toiled. She saw him wield
A scythe and smiled.... All of a sudden
There was she wide awake and under
A haystack sitting.... Heavens!... Tightly
Her child she swaddled, and in haste
Went off to reap—the steward, might he
Not come upon her, angry-faced!...

St. Petersburg,
July 13, 1858

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

I'm not unwell, it's just that I
Some things that loom ahead espy,
And that my heart for something waits.
It weeps and whimpers, sobs and aches,
Just like a child that's not been fed.
Perhaps it senses nought ahead
But still more ills? Await no good,
Expected freedom don't await—
It is asleep: Tsar Nicholas
Lulled it to sleep. But if you'd wake
This sickly freedom, all the folk
Must in their hands sledge-hammers take
And axes sharp—and then all go
That sleeping freedom to awake.
If not, the wretched thing will stay
Asleep right up to Judgement Day!
The masters will not let it rise,
They'll build more palaces and shrines,
Their drunken tsar they will adore,
And worship the Byzantian[69] rites—
And, as I see it, nothing more.

St. Petersburg,
November 22, 1858

Translated
by John Wein

ISAIAH. CHAPTER 35

AN IMITATION

Rejoice, o desert, arid wilderness!
Rejoice, o barren land, whose nakedness
No raiment knows of golden grain!
Let blossoms bright bedeck your plain!
Lo, like the banks of holy Jordan
With gardens lush and meadows verdant
You'll flourish in the days to be!
And then the honour and the glory
Of Lebanon and Carmel hoary,[70]
Not crafty cant, will mantle thee
In priestly vestment, sewn so finely,
Goodwill and freedom for their living,
With golden thread on silken sheen.
And then the people blind and witless
A miracle divine shall witness.

The toil-worn, weary bondsmen's hands
That day will rest at ease,
And from their iron fetter-bands
Their legs will be released!
Rejoice, ye poor, take heart, ye meek—
'Tis Judgement Day on Earth,
And God has come to set you free,
Who chains have borne since birth.
And to ill-doers He will mete
According to their crimes!
When sacred justice, Lord, arrives
If only for a fleeting hour

To rest upon this Earth of ours....
The blind will open up their eyes,
The halt like startled stags will run.
The dumb will find their voice once more;
And like a flood the words will pour
Until this parched and sterile plain
Is watered with reviving rain
And comes to life; gay streams will flow
Through fertile fields, and shady trees
About the silver lakes will grow,
While song-birds make all Nature glow.

Then land and lake with life will teem,
In place of narrow roads of old
On every side there will unfold
New highways, broad and sacred roads
Of freedom: and the rulers won't
Those new roads discover,
But all the slaves will tread those ways
Without fuss or bother
To come together, brothers free,
In gay celebration.
And where the desert was, will be
Happy habitations.

St. Petersburg,
March 25, 1859

Translated
by John Weir

N.N.[71]

A lily of as tender beauty
As yours once bloomed on Jordan's shore
And o'er the earth the Holy Word
She spread defiantly.... If duty
You too should bid—No, no, O Dniester's
Sweet bloom! They'll crucify you, they
Will lead you, their defenceless prey,
Off to Siberia in fetters.
I can't go on....
O God, have mercy
And make, for this thou canst, her lot
A happy one; let her on earth here
Know paradise, I pray.... Do not
Remove her to thy Heaven.... Better
That she stay here, God.... In the sight
Of all thy earthly wonders let her
Take endless relish and delight!

St. Petersburg,
April 19, 1859

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Brown eyes have I, and with passion they're blazing,
But in their depths, mother, no one is gazing,
No one, alas, in their dark depths is gazing!

Soft hands have I, but there's no one to bless them,
No one to touch them, to kiss and caress them,
No one, my mother, to kiss or caress them!

Light feet have I, light and quick like no other,
But there is no one, I fear me, my mother,
No one to take them out dancing, my mother!

Piryatin,
June 10, 1859

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

TO MY SISTER[72]

As on the Dnieper shore I wandered
Past joyless villages and pondered
My lot, I asked myself where I
Would refuge find.... Then, later,
slumber
Came to me 'neath the open sky,
And in my dream I saw a humble
Hut, bloom-entwined, on hillock
stand....
A pretty lass it looked....
Below it,
In sunlight shimmering and glowing,
The mighty Dnieper swiftly ran.
Beside the hut, her sweet face shaded
By cherry blossoms, sat a maiden,
My sister own, a martyr she
And saintly sufferer! An Eden
The garden seemed, where, partly
hidden
From sight, she waited patiently
For me, the helpless one, and sought to
Descry a boat upon the water....
There comes it now: a wave leaps high
And hurls it up.... I hear her cry:
"O woe is me! My life! My brother!..."
I wake: slaves are we both, and sad
Our fate has ever been, another
We've never known. From birth we tread

A field of thorns, by all forsaken.
Pray, sister! If we live, the Maker
Will help us cross it.
Pray! Be glad.

Cherkassi,
July 20, 1859

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

At times I hang my head in sorrow
And ask myself: What will tomorrow
Bring me but grief? How will I live?
How praises to the good God give
And to mankind?... My bed a dirty
Pool, there I lie, a log, and rot.
And when I rot away, then what?...
Upon this plundered earth, 'tis certain,
No vestige will remain of me....
Alas! the world's new pilates—see them?—
Wait for their prey.... Where hide? How flee
them?
They burn and freeze and crucify!...

Cherkassi,
July 21, 1859

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

MARY

"Rejoice, for thou didst put new life
into them that in shame were begat."

Song of Praise to the Holy Virgin,
Canto 10

All of my hopes I place in thee,
O saintly queen of paradise,
O spirit robed in chastity....
All of my hopes I place in thee,
Sweet mother mine. Thou that art wise
And merciful, I pray thee gaze
Upon these blind and wretched slaves
And with thy tears, O loved one, lave
Their festering wounds.... Thus wilt thou
raise
Thy children from the dust, whose days
Are agony.... O give them, do,
The strength that did thy son sustain
Throughout his martyrdom; unto
The very grave do not disdain
Their awful cross to help them bear.
On thee I call, O sovereign of
Both earth and heaven, on the love
That fills thy heart—let not despair
Consume them, heed their moans and send
A clement and a kindly end
To them, I beg of thee! And I,
If e'er these hamlets thrive,
shall try
To praise thy fate in psalm serene,
Thy holy fate.... Alas, supreme
Grief reigneth round us, and I lift
My voice to speak of it.... Sweet friend,

To thee I humbly recommend
My humble soul's last humble gift.

From early childhood, Mary lived
In Joseph's house. The old man was
A carpenter, I do believe,
Or cooper; she, dear sweet-faced lass,
His servant.... Time is known to fly,
And so it did. The maiden flowered
Out into womanhood, her bower
The lowly hut where lovely as
A rose she blossomed. A haven true
Was that poor hut to man and maid.
The carpenter would lay aside
His tools to gaze at her who grew
Daily more lovely, and forget
To ply his trade, so full of wonder
Would he become.... Did Heaven send her
To be his child or wife?.... Regret
Seized him at times.... His youth had flown,
While she, poor orphan, was alone
In all the world.... Such were the thoughts
That oft would come to him unsought.
And Mary, sitting by the fence,
Spun clouds of snowy yarn to make
A cape for him, or hurried thence
With goat and kid down to the lake
Where grazed the two for hours on end.
A good way off it was, but she
Did love the holy waters of
The broad Tiberias, and there
Was always willing to repair,
Laughing in glee, glad that no move
Was made by Joseph to reprove
Her who was but a servant for
Roaming the countryside.... Bemused,
He'd sit there idly, while she used
The hours to stand upon the shore,
And stare, like one bewitched, upon
The quiet waters, an orison

Filling her heart, her brilliant eye
Clouded with thought.... Thus did she speak:
"Tiberias, thou mighty sea,
Thou king of lakes, of thee I seek
An answer.... Tell me, what's to be
My fate and Joseph's?..." And so saying,
One fateful day, she stood there swaying,
A lonely poplar in the wind.
"The old man's burden I will shoulder,
I'll be a child to him, a daughter....
Aye, in my youth a prop he'll find."
She smiled at this, her eye glowed brighter,
She stirred, her chiton softly slipped
From off her pearl-white shoulder, kept
Hidden beneath its ragged folds,
And beauty dazzling to behold
Was thus revealed, such as man's eye
Had never seen.... But destiny's cold
And evil hand her steps did guide
Along a thorny path, delighting
In mocking her, poor maiden!...
Lightly
She ran along the shore, beside
The tranquil lake, and soon espied
A burdock growing there.... She stooped,
And, plucking it, atop her head
Perched it, that head so young, that saintly,
That lovely head.... Then, sighing faintly,
She vanished in the grove ahead.
O sun, o light that never wanes,
O maid as pure as thou art fair,
O tender lily of the plains,
In what dark forest, in what rare
And secret spot canst thou find shelter
From that remorseless ray, that bitter
And scorching blaze which, without flame,
Will soon reduce thy heart to cinders,
Will flood thy soul, and helpless render
Thy being?... Nowhere!... It will claim
All of thyself.... 'Tis kindled, aye,

That all-consuming fire, 'tis raging,
Its fearful victory presaging
Over thy youth and over thy
Chaste loveliness.... 'Twill permeate
Thy blood, and eat into thy marrow,
And lay the stamp of darkest sorrow
Upon thy brow; 'twill lick thy feet
As in thine own son's wake thou'lt go
Across Gehenna.... See—the glow
Of that devouring, deadly blaze—
It is reflected in thy gaze,
It is thy future, lass.... But no!...
Avert thine eyes from sight so cruel,
Into thy tresses twine yonder cool
And fragrant blooms, and in the shade
Sleep while there's time....

At even, out the twilit grove
She stole, did Mary.... Up above
The moon shone bright. Mount Tabor
gleamed
As though of gold and silver made,
Blinding the sight.... With humble love,
Her eyes, those radiant eyes and starry,
The maiden shyly, meekly raised
And at its magic beauty gazed,
Smiling in sudden joy, then hurried
To lead the goat and kid away,
Pausing to sing:

O forest, hear me,
Not long, I fear me,
Will I, so fair,
Without a care
Stroll here among
Beauty unsung,
God's wondrous treasures,
'Thout end or measure!

She silent fell.
Then, looking round her, took the kid
Up in her arms, her pensive mood

Broken, and, leaving the shady wood
And lake behind her, gaily tripped
Along the winding path that led
To Joseph's hut. As if it were
A babe, the kid she hugged and petted
And to her bosom pressed, and let it
Lick at her hands, and kissed its nose,
And like a kitten it nestled close
And playful waxed, and did not bleat
But seemed to like it so. Her feet
Dancing along the road, the maid
Went on without a pause, a fleet
And graceful figure....
Beside the gate
Old Joseph, anxious-hearted, waited
For her return. He hesitated,
Then said: "My child, but thou art late,
What hath been keeping thee so long?...
'Tis dark outside. But run along
And rest a bit, thou fidget, that we
May later supper take with our
Young guest." "A guest?" "Aye,
and the hour
Is late, so rest, and then thou'lt see
The man, my pet." "Where hails he from?"
"From Nazareth. With us this night
He'll pass.... If I did hear aright,
He says that Zacharias' home
The Lord has blessed: but yester-morn
Elisabeth was of a son
Delivered, and the couple called him
John...." As he spake, behold him!—
Their guest appeared, clad in a white
Chiton that flowed down to his bare,
Sandalless feet, his presence a light
Casting on all, tall, with an air
Of majesty about him.... On
The step he paused, and bowed at sight
Of Mary looking pale and wan
All of a sudden to see the bright

Halo circling his head, and lighting
The air about him.... Her breath she caught,
And touched old Joseph's arm, and sought
To calm herself, a frightened child,
No more, no less.... Into the arbour
She bade them come, and fetched some water,
A jug of milk, a head of cheese,
The simple fare she knew would please
Both host and guest; then, as they ate,
Apart from them she silent sat
And could not bring herself to try
A morsel even. Muffling a sigh,
And then, she knew not why, another,
She huddled in the farthest corner
And hearkened to the holy words
Their strange young guest did speak....
She heard
His voice alone, it touched a string
Deep in her heart, and, shivering,
As in a fever Mary burned!
"Hear me," he now was saying, "and learn
That never such as we shall see
Was in Judea heretofore
Witnessed or known.... The Rabbi, he
Whom we do worship and adore,
Spake, and the words he uttered fell
Upon a freshly furrowed field,
And rich shall be the crop thereof.
I go to herald to the world
Messiah's coming...."
Filled with a love
That rent her spirit, Mary kneeled
'Fore the apostle, and she prayed.

The bonfire burned with steady flame,
Old Joseph to his God appealed
In silence, and his thoughts were grave.
Time passed. The fire was burning still
When dawn's first ray, remote and chill,
Crept up the sky.... Then Mary rose,

And took a jug and off she went
For water to the spring; the task
Was one she liked. And in her wake
Went the apostle. 'Twas in the vale
He overtook her....
The sky was pale
And still unlit, when for the lake
The three of them together started,
Mary and Joseph, happy-hearted,
Guiding their guest.... They left him there
And then returned.
Numb with despair,
Her glowing beauty marred by tears,
Mary awaited him. She grew
Daily more white and gaunt, a queer
Faintness beset her. Joseph knew
A gnawing fear. "What ails thee, child?"
He asked. "We'd best, I trow, be wed.
Else will they...."—Nay, his Mary dead,
Slain by the mob—the vision held
Blank, haunting horror.... Sobbing loudly,
His counsel Mary heeded.
Sadly
They left their home, and side by side
Set out for town. The old man carried
A basket with some wares of his
Which he did mean to sell, for this
Would give him coin wherewith to marry
And buy his bride a gift....
O pious,
O godly patriarch, 'tis from
Thy poor and unassuming home
And not from Zion that true bliss
Doth shine on us.... For hadst thou not
Stretched out a helping hand to her
Who is so pure, then would our lot
Have been the lot of sufferers,
Of slaves that slaves must die.
O sorrow,
O deepest woe, what bring the morrow

To such as—Nay, I do not speak
Of ye, the blind of heart, and meek
Of spirit, but of such as see
The axe suspended mightily
Over their heads, but forge new fetters....
They shall, I know it well, be slaughtered,
And of their blood the hounds will drink!

But where is he whose fate is linked
With thine and Mary's? Where is your sly
And cunning visitor, and why
Hath he not deigned to look upon
Your pure and holy marriage?... None
Have heard of him or the Messiah,
Yet do they hopeless wait, relying
On empty dreams.
Thy trust reposeth
In God, O Mary. Wherefore, lass,
Art thou so gullible?... Alas,
Deaf to thy tearful pleas He chooseth
To stay; await no boons of Him
Or of His messenger, that dim
And transient figure. Be thou grateful
To fate that thou art Joseph's lawful,
His wedded wife, that he hath not
Cast thee from him, that on the road
Thou liest not stoned and dead, forgot
By all good folk, that his abode,
However poor, is thine!
While in
Jerusalem, they heard the rumour
('Twas whispered in the streets and inns)
That at Tiberias had died
A someone who had prophesied
Messiah's coming. On the cross
He'd met his end.
"'Tis he!..." the bride
Of Joseph uttered. She was lost
In joyous wonder, and it brought
A smile to her young lips. The thought

That this young maid bore in her womb
A righteous soul, dispelled the gloom
Of Joseph somewhat. Aye, 'twas true,
The prophet's parting word!...
The two
To Nazareth now made their way
And to their house.
Their wedded life
Was from the outset far from gay.
With thread and needle, the virgin wife
Sat stitching tiny garments, while
Her husband fashioned for the child
A wooden cradle....
At the door
There came a rap.... "The Caesar's will
Is that you go this very hour
To Bethlehem, the census there
Is to be held!..." The voice boomed out,
Seeming to jar upon their senses....
It died, and all was still without.

In haste did Mary set to baking
Some flat-cakes, and when this was done,
She put them in a basket, making
No fuss and saying little. On
Their way they started, with a prayer
To God to keep them safe, and spare
Them suffering.
The day was near
Of her confinement, and to have
Milk when they needed it, they drove
The goat and kid before them, stopping
To rest now and again, and hoping
All would be well.
In bloom the land
Around them lay as they did bend
Their steps toward Bethlehem, in low
Though earnest tones conversing, so
That none might hear. "Old Simeon
Hath said to me that the Essenes,

And this have others too foreseen,"
Said Joseph, "will, I take it, soon
The law of Moses reinstate,
And Abraham.... He doth await,
Doth Simeon, Messiah's coming.
The day, the happy day is nearing!"
She shook her head. "He was among us,
And we did see him." On the ground
His basket Joseph carefully
Set down beside a moss-grown mound,
And taking out a cake, to Mary
He proffered it, for he was weary,
And so was she, and hungry too.
Upon the grass beside the road
They sat.... 'Twas midday, and the blue
Of sky was bright and seemed to bode
A mellow day. But lo! The scene
Changed suddenly. The sun still glowed,
But seemed to shrink in size, its beam
No longer brilliant; then, from sight
It sank, behold!... The dark of night
Obscured the field. No eye had e'er
Observed its like. The carpenter
Started in awe, and gave a cry,
For in the black and ominous sky
Just over Bethlehem appeared
A fiery, bushy-headed spear,
A streak of flame that bathed the vales
And hills in light, and slowly blazed
Its way across the heavens....
Dazed,
Did Mary watch, and, turning pale,
Knew that her time had come....
A son
Was born to her, the saintly being
Who did for all our sins atone
By dying on the cross and freeing
Those held in chains....
Some shepherds were
Grazing their flock not far from where

Lay Mary and her child. To her
At once they hastened, and to their tent
The babe and mother took, content
To have them there.... Emmanuel
They named the boy.

No rousing knell
Announced the gathering at dawn
Of white-lipped, anxious men upon
The square of Bethlehem. 'Twas whispered
And passed from mouth to mouth in fright
That very soon a fresh disaster
Would on them all descend and blight
Their very lives....
"Good folk, rejoice!"
Panting, the man ran up, his voice
Broken and hoarse. "The prophecy
Of Jeremiah and Isaiah
Hath now come true at last, for he,
For yesterday the true Messiah
Was born, and we are saved for aye."
The shout went up: "O blessed day!...
Hosanna!... Jesus!... The Messiah!..."
And now the crowd, the women crying
In joy, dispersed.
Within the hour
King Herod's legion was dispatched
To Bethlehem. It was empowered
To do what must remain unmatched
In history.
In their cribs sleeping
The babes lay, and the mothers were
Up and about and busy heating
Water to bathe them in, when on
The town the soldiers did descend,
And in the blood of innocents
Their knives they bathed.
The ray of dawn
Did see the murdered babies lie,
By swords pierced ruthlessly....

Upon
The deeds of tyrants gaze, and ne'er
Forget, o mothers!...
Mary fared
Better than most: her baby son
Was saved.
For this, our thanks to you
We owe, kind shepherds, that did true
Compassion show, and so our saviour
Delivered from an early death.
You gave the virgin food and shelter,
And, braving Herod's awful wrath,
Did along hidden pathways guide
The holy family unto
The Memphis road which ran beside
A range of jutting hills. With rare
And tender sympathy you shared
Your all with them, and, knowing need
Yourselves, an ass as parting gift
To Mary gave.
Night had descended,
And still the blazing spearhead wended
Its way across the sky, and lit
The winding road, and watched the flight
Of Mary and the young Messiah
To Egypt.

There is no denying
That had a queen astride an ass,
If such could ever come to pass,
Been seen to ride, the ass's fame
Would spread throughout. And this one
carried
A living deity, and Mary!
And yet none knew the beast by name
Or thought to say a kindly word
In praise of it.... 'Twas later heard
That some poor Copt had offered to
Buy it of Joseph, but withdrew
His offer, for the ass fell dead

Upon the road....
A mellow ray
Of sunlight touched the baby's face
As 'neath a willow-tree he lay,
Asleep. Beside the Nile, a pace
Or two away, the mother sat,
And, weeping o'er their hapless fate,
A crib of rods and grasses plaited,
While Joseph, fearing if he waited
The darkness would engulf them, was
Building a tent of rushes.
As
For night's approach they thus prepared,
With sightless eyes the Sphinxes stared
Like owls at them. Beyond the Nile,
The Pyramids upon the sands,
As though the Pharaohs' stern commands
Obeying, stood in single file,
Like sentinels, and seemed to warn
Their sovereigns great to be on guard,
For o'er the Earth the Truth of God
Was rising....
Early in the morn
To tend some sheep would Joseph go
(Thus did their busy day begin)
While Mary helped a Copt to spin
His yarn. In wearing toil their woe
Was oft forgot. If but they could
Save up a little coin and buy
Themselves a goat!...
A year passed by.
The old man sat in solitude
And out of blocks of seasoned wood
Made stools and tables, and hummed the while
He worked.... And thou, whose heart
no guile
Hath e'er contained, thou holy one,
Thou didst not weep, but o'er thy son
Stayed lost in deep and troubled thought:
For how is a child to be taught

The ways of good, how kept away
From evil in a time and day
With evil fraught!...
Another year
Slips past.... A goat is grazing near
The house, and in the entrance-way
A kid is frolicking, the boy
Watching it gleefully. Her joy
Mingling with sadness, Mary gazeth
Adoringly at him, and praiseth
God for his mercy....
Up the hill
Old Joseph cometh, panting. He
Hath sold some wares of his, and see!—
Brought gifts from town: this kerchief will
Become the youthful wife, this cake
Delight the boy, these straps of leather
Hold up his own worn sandals.
"Mother,"
Saith he to Mary, "we can make
For home at last!... King Herod's dead.
He feasted much too well, 'tis said,
And died of it. Let us not tarry,
But leave at once. Our quiet haven
Awaiteth us, dear heart. At even
We'd best be off." To this did Mary
Agree at once, and off she went
To wash the baby's things. The goats
Were browsing near, and in the tent
The boy was playing. Joseph bent
To pick him up, and on his knee
He rocked him gently. Hastily
The mother in the yellow Nile
Her washing scrubbed and rinsed, and while
'Twas drying, she helped Joseph make
His sandals....
Taking up the child
And lifting, each, a heavy sack,
They started on their journey back.
'Twas sorry going, but at last

They reached their ancient home....
Alas!
May none set eye upon a sight
So desolate, so grim. A waste,
A wilderness.... The grass-grown glade
Where once had stood the house, a bright
Though modest dwelling, was no more.
As for the house, the heart went sore
To see the ugly mass of clay
And scattered heaps of stone.
Dismay
Filled Mary's soul, and to the spring
With burning cheeks she made her way....
'Twas here their saintly visitor
She had encountered.... Overgrown
With weeds the spring now was, and wore
A most neglected look.
O lone,
O stricken heart, thine agony
Dissolve in tears.... O Mary, pray,
Pray, and be patient, sweet one.... Stay!
Drown not thyself, for 'tis through thee
That we, poor slaves, can be redeemed,
Through thee alone, for not a gleam
Of simplest hope can we retain
Should this young son of thine remain
A helpless orphan, nor ever know
What justice is or truth.... But no,
A sob escapeth thee, another,
A third.... Thou findest solace, Mother,
In tears, the pain that gripped thy heart
Hath lifted, we are saved!...

In parts
Not far removed, at Nazareth,
Their widowed friend Elisabeth
Lived with her son. She was related
To them, and so, in truth, 'twas fated
That in this hour of need they should
Seek help of her who was a good

And kindly soul. The family
Now go to Nazareth to see
The widow, and to ask for shelter
And work as well.
What could a better,
More gainly sight present than two
Young, sprightly lads absorbed in play!...
On mat and floor, like bear cubs true,
They rolled, or ran about, or strayed
Behind the house, and, finding there
Two sticks, rushed back in glee to share
These riches with their mothers, eager
To have them use the sticks for wood
To heat the stove. Their health and vigour
Was good to see. In kindly mood
The mothers watched.... The younger boy
Took both the sticks (John had been skipping
About the yard on his and whipping
His hobbyhorse with shouts of joy)
And formed a cross of them, and carried
The cross triumphantly to Mary
To show her that at carpentry
He matched his father. And Mary, spying
The gallows in his hands, came flying
From out the house—more pale was she
Than death itself. "What rogue is he,
What evil-hearted wretch that taught
My child to make the like!" she cried,
And, running wildly to his side,
She pulled it from his grasp, and caught
The boy up in her arms, and sought
To soothe him, for a fount of tears
Rushed from his eyes. To quell his fears,
She took him to a shady nook
Behind the house, while still he shook
With sobs, and held him tight, and gave
A sweet to him. And in her love
The boy found comfort, and was soon
Engaged in play.... The afternoon
Wore on, and in his mother's lap

He slept at last, and looked a very
Angel from paradise, and Mary
Looked down at him, and o'er his sleep
Kept loving watch. She smiled, but deep
Within her heart there lurked a pain
That brought on tears. Hot, burning ones,
They gushed.... For fear she wake her son
She did not wipe them, but in vain
To check their fall attempted. They
Rolled down her cheeks, and though she stayed
Quite still, onto the sleeper's face
Fell fast.... Like drops of liquid flame
They stung him. With a start he came
Awake.... The mother's warm embrace,
Her smile were there for him, but he,
Young as he was, her agony
Sensed with his heart, and at her breast
Wept bitterly.

Out of her earnings
(Herself, the mother had no learning,
But wanted him to have the best
Of everything) she bought a grammar,
And sent him in his seventh summer
To school. The boy, though young, was keen
On study, and the strict Essenes
Were pleased. And as for wisdom, that
He learnt from her, and kindness too,
And goodness.

John was e'er his true,
His one close friend. At school, they sat
Together always, and were never
Seen far apart for long. A lover
Of solitude, Emmanuel,
In truth, liked nothing quite so well
As sitting in some quiet corner
All by himself and thoughtfully
Hewing a stave. From other boys
He kept aloof and in their joys
But seldom joined. Such industry,

And in a lad but just turned seven,
Delighted Joseph who was driven
To prideful speculation on
The youngster's future, for his son,
He saw, was craftsman born....
One morning,

At break of day, they started for
Jerusalem. All three with wares
Were loaded to the full, the father
Hoping that they could get a fair
Price for them there, for to no other
In size could this old city be
Compared, or wealth....
A lively trade
Was soon in progress.... Suddenly,
The mother looked, and was dismayed
To find Emmanuel was gone....
Where could he be?...
To find her son
Was now her only thought. She held
Her tears in check and rushed about
In frightened search of him, impelled
By some strange force. A horrid doubt
Had seized her....
In a synagogue
She found him, midst the rabbis. He
Was preaching God's own truth to them,
The sages of Jerusalem,
Telling these haughty Pharisees
To love all men, and fight for truth,
Aye, and for justice, unto death!...
They listened, wondering.... And Mary
Was full of gladness, she was carried
Into a transport of delight,
For was not God before her!...
Night
Was coming on when they at last
Made off for home.
Emmanuel

And John, the widow's son, were fast
Approaching manhood. They were well
Versed in their trade, and scholarly,
And both did proudly choose to tread
The thorny path of life.
They spread
The Word of God, and fearlessly
Upon the cross for freedom died,
For sacred freedom!...
John denied
Himself, and as a hermit spent
His days. As for thy son, he went,
O Mary, amongst men, and sought
All o'er the earth to propagate
His Teaching.... Thou didst leave thy mate,
Old Joseph, and, thyself untaught,
Didst follow him, thine own sweet son,
And never faltered.... On and on
Thy pathway stretched, remote and weary.
And thou didst trudge along it, till
Before thee, Golgotha, O Mary,
Lay beckoning.... It put a chill
Into thy heart, and yet thy will,
O holy one, remained unbroken.
Thou didst with soaring spirit hearken
To every word thy son did speak.
Thou wert beside him even while
He sat and gazed with thoughtful smile
Upon Jerusalem, awake
To its proud beauty. He, thy child,
Took in the temple where Israel's own
High Priest was seen to walk alone,
Rome's golden pleb, in robes of gold
Attired.
A most uncanny hold
The city had on him. He'd sit
For hours upon Mount Olivet,
And gaze on it, thyself forgot....
But, Mary, thou didst mind it not.
The holy city's splendour brought

Tears to thine eyes, and, weeping, thou
Didst to the spring for water go,
And, seeing thy son still rapt in thought,
To all his needs didst minister,
However small. Thou didst repair
His chiton, and his thirst appease,
And bathe his feet, and tenderly
Watch o'er his sleep.... 'Twas good to see
The children run to him, well pleased
To climb the slope and be with one
They loved, and follow him where'er
He went. And he, thy grown-up son,
In all their games did gladly share.
Whene'er they came, his smile caressed
These smudge-faced angels, and he blessed
And kissed them, saying: "O pure of soul,
O innocent of heart, my all
Would I in gladness give to you!"
So always doth he speak, this true
Child of God....
As full of glee
As are his youthful playmates, he
Leaveth Mount Olivet behind him
And entereth Jerusalem,
And to the false of heart and crafty
Doth humbly strive to bring God's lofty
And burning Word of Truth.
Alas!
They heed the prophet not. "The cross!
The cross for him!" they, jeering, cry,
And lead him off....
And thou, surrounded
By sobbing children, dost stand dumbfounded
Beside the cross and watch him die.

And his disciples—full of fright
They flee from him.
"For ye the light
Will shine if but ye follow him!"
Thou dost cry out, but dark and dim

The world now groweth, and to the ground
Thou fallest 'thout another sound.
The days pass by.... Thou goest, bowed
With sorrow, back to Nazareth.
Thy kindly friend Elisabeth
Hath died and been by strangers laid
To rest, poor soul. John too is dead,
In dungeon murdered. And thy spouse,
Old Joseph, is no more....
Thou art
Alone in all the world, dear heart!...
They that the teaching did espouse
Of Jesus while he lived have fled
From punishment, the cowards, wed
To basest fear....
And thou, thou learnest
Where they are hiding, and with earnest
And loving words, by Heaven led,
Summonest them to join thee, leaving
Their fears behind them.
Thus, believing
In him who was thy son, the breath
Didst thou of firm and selfless faith
Instil into their souls, O Mary,
Their weakling souls.
May Heaven's glory
Forevermore be thine, forever
May thou be blessed. Through thine
endeavour
These pious men from sleep arose
And, born anew, to lift they chose
Thy martyred son's own standard, bearing
His flaming Word of Love and Truth
To all the corners of the earth
And to all hearts, themselves declaring
To be his servants. As for thee,
Thou didst in want and poverty
Live out thy days, and die of hunger,
Hid from the avid sight of men,
Beneath a crumbling wall. Amen!...

And then the monks, when thou wert
dead,
Arrayed thee in a crimson gown,
And on thine head a golden crown
They placed, and to a cross
Did nail thee in their cruelty.
They spat upon thy purity
And sullied it! But, clean as gold
Upon the hearth, thou didst anew
Rise in the souls of men, the true
And faithful and unblemished souls
Of humble serfs and sufferers.

St. Petersburg,
November 11, 1859

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

THE HYMN OF THE NUNS

Come, O lightning, hasten hither,
Strike God's house[73] where slow we wither.
As for thee, O Lord, we warn thee:
We disclaim thee, aye, and scorn thee.
Hallelujah!

But for thee, for thee alone, God,
Love and wifehood we'd have known, God.
Sons we would have borne and daughters,
And to sing we would have taught them:
Hallelujah!

Thou dost feed us lies and fool us,
And by wiles and hoaxes rule us,
But we pay thee back in kind, God;
Wail we loudly as the blind, God:
Hallelujah!

Cropped our hair is, yet 'tis very
Gay we ever keep and merry.
Watch us dancing, hear us singing,
Hear us call in voices ringing:
Hallelujah!

St. Petersburg
June 20, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Speak, my good, my gentle people,
You whose hearts are free and chainless:
In your own warm house, my people,
Why are you walled up and fettered?
    Why are you, so rich of wisdom,
    Duped, my brothers, duped and cheated,
Choked with robes of gold and purple,
Done to death?...

—Nay, living! Wakeful!
Why, then, rise and bring us knowledge!...
Bring us knowledge, and for foot cloths
We will use those robes of purple,
We will light our pipes from censers,
Holy icons burn for firewood,
And our bright new house and shining
Sweep with aspergills, my brothers!

St. Petersburg,
June 27, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

TO LIKERA[74]

In memory of August 5, 1860

Beloved mine! My sweet, my friend!
Without a cross they won't believe us,
Without a priest they will not leave us
In peace, those grovelling slaves that spend
Their lives asleep in serfdom's puddle
And there like hogs together huddle.
Beloved mine! On them your prayers
And vows waste not, do not lay bare
Your soul to them—whatever mantle
They wear, they lie, and the Byzantine
Sabaoth dupes the pure of heart....
God, God alone will fool us not.
He'll neither punish nor forgive us—
We're not his slaves, we're human beings!...
Come, dear one, smile and give me your
Free hand and heart, and spirit saintly,
And this will help us cross untainted
That smelly puddle and to bear
The woes and griefs that may await us;
Nay, more!—'twill help us hide from care
And evil and our hearts' disquiet
In some small cottage, small and quiet.

Strelna,
August 5, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

Wine was a potion Galileo
And Archimedes never drank;
Into the paunches of the monks
Streamed holy oil.... You, prophets, freely
Spread o'er the world and bags of grain
Gave to its wretched kings.... No gain
The corn the kings have sown will bring them,
For beaten down by hailstorms stinging
'Twill be.... Before they are conceived
The princelings they will die, and leave
The earth reborn, with its inhuman,
Brute foes of man for ever gone.
But mothers there will be, and sons—
Aye, here on earth there will be humans!

St. Petersburg,
September 24, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

The days go by, the nights go by....
I clutch my head and seek an answer.
"Why comes he not—," dismayed I cry,
"Of truth and knowledge the apostle?"

St. Petersburg,
November 5, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

By a spring a sycamore
On the hilltop grows.
Down the hill into the vale
Swift the water flows.
Soft of hue, a guelder rose
Blossoms on the green,
And a leafy willow tree
Weeps beside the stream.

Round a wood the streamlet runs,
And its voice is gay.
Near the bank, amid the sedge,
Ducklings splash and play.
Mother Duck and Father Duck
Swim beside their brood.
Mother Duck the ducklings shows
How to look for food.

To the stream a maiden comes,
Two bright pails she brings.
To the stream a maiden comes
And a song she sings.
To her side her parents haste;
There she sits, the lass.
"Tell us who our child will wed!"
Of the stream they ask.

St. Petersburg,
November 7, 1860

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

* * *

The time has come, my humble neighbour,
Think you not so, to waste our labour
On poor and worthless verse no more,
But load our carts and set out for
A distant region, God's own harbour....
Upon those misty shores, so far from
This world, we'll rest from all our chores.
We've gained in wisdom, true, but dearly
Paid for the privilege: we're weary
And worn.... Enough! 'Tis time for sleep,
That hut will serve, the place is cheery....
Our slumber, dear one, will be deep.
Wait! Not yet, love, do not hurry,
Let us haste not yonder.
Here together let us tarry
And in awe and wonder
Gaze upon the world around us
And its many treasures....
Wide the world is, lofty, boundless,
Full of homely pleasures....
Speak you true, my star. Before us
Rears a mountain.... Fearless,
Let us climb it. Waiting for us
There, on high, quite near us,
Float your sister stars....
How brightly
Glow they!... Let us stay there,
In the sight of them delighting,
Let us, silent, pray there,

Pray with spirits pure and taintless,
Toward our Maker turning,
Then embark, my sister saintly,
On our final journey.
As we stand above the turbid
Waters of the Lethe,
Bless me, dear one, give me glory,
Share your bounty with me.

February 14

Meanwhile, it still remains to us
To see old Aesculapius—
What if he should the Fates and Charon
Help us to fool? Being a rare one
For wisdom, he is bound to try
And dream his dreams, and you and I
Can then lie on our backs, composing
An epic, we can float on rosy
Clouds high above the earth and spin
Hexameters, these to a garret
Transferring for the mice to tear at
And nibble.... As for prose, we'll trim
It nicely, thank you, and to music
Set it.... O comrade of my choosing,
My saintly friend, while still the fire
Burns bright and clear, let us repair
To a realm where Charon, patient,
Waits beside the ferry,
Over turbid Lethe let us
Youthful glory carry,
Glory sacred and eternal—
Stay, dear friend, if need be,
We can surely do without it.
If the good Lord heeds me,
If He gives me strength, I'll build me
A hut above the Phlegethon,
Or o'er the Styx or e'en in Heaven,
A cosy hut, just like the one
That on the Dnieper bank, surrounded

By trees and shrubs, once stood, and you
Beside me in the shady garden
Will sit, and we'll recall anew
The Dnieper and our own beloved
Ukraine, her steppes and mounds and leas,
And sing a happy song and free,
Like those that used to soar above it....

St. Petersburg,
February 15, 1861

Translated
by Irina Zheleznova

PROSE

THE ARTIST[75]

The great Thorvaldsen began his brilliant artistic career by carving ornaments and tritons with fishes' tails for snub-nosed Copenhagen ships. My hero began his not so brilliant but nevertheless artistic career by grinding ochre and mummy between millstones, and painting floors, ceilings and fences. A dismal, hopeless beginning. But are there then many of you, fortunate artistic geniuses, who began otherwise? Very, very few! In Holland, for example, in its most brilliant golden heyday, Ostade, Berchem, Teniers and a host of notable artists (with the exception of Rubens and Van Dyke) started and finished their great careers in rags. It would be unjust to point to mercantile Holland alone. Open up Vazari and there you'll find the same if not worse. I say worse, because at that time even the policy of Saint Peter's heirs called for elegant decorations to dazzle the crowd and eclipse the heretical teachings of Wycliffe and Hus, which were already beginning to educate that fearless Dominican—Luther. Then too, I say, when Leo X and Julius II[76] suddenly bethought themselves and poured gold on every painter and stone-mason that happened to be around, even at that golden time great artists starved to death, as for example, Correggio and Zampieri. And that happened (not very rarely, unfortunately), at all times and everywhere, wherever the divine and vivifying art penetrated! It happens also in our enlightened nineteenth century, the century of philanthropy and of all things that tend to bring benefit to mankind, despite all the means at its disposal to remove and cover the sacrifice

To the punishing goddess doomed.

The question then arises: why does such a sad and bitter lot almost always fall to those angels personified, those representatives of vital virtue on the earth? Probably because they are angels in the flesh.

These reasonings serve only to take the reader away from the subject which I intend to present to him as clearly as on the palm of the hand.

In Petersburg I nearly always passed the summer nights on the street or somewhere on the islands, or more often yet, on the Academy embankment. Especially did I like the place when the Neva River is calm and like a gigantic mirror reflects to the tiniest detail the majestic portico of the Rumyantsev museum, a corner of the Senate and the scarlet curtains in the home of Countess Laval. In the long winter nights that mansion was lit up inside and the scarlet curtains flamed like a fire against the dark background, and I was always annoyed that the Neva was then covered with ice and snow, and therefore the decoration lost its true effect.

In the summer-time I also liked to meet the sunrise on Troitsky Bridge. A marvellous, majestic picture! In a genuinely artistic painting there is something that is more charming and beautiful than nature itself—that is the uplifted spirit of the artist, his divine creativeness. On the other hand, there are such wonderful phenomena in nature before which the poet-artist bows to the earth and can only give thanks to the Creator for such thrilling moments of rapture.

I often admired Shchedrin's landscapes and especially was I captivated by his small painting, *Portici Before Sunset.* A fascinating work! But it never fascinated me so much as did the view from Troitsky Bridge towards Vyborg Side just before sunrise.

One time, having enjoyed to the brim this marvellous work of nature, I walked over to the Summer Gardens for a rest. Whenever I happened to be in the Summer Gardens, I never stopped on any of the alleys which are ornamented with marble statues: those statues impressed

me most unfavourably, especially the ugly Saturn gobbling up his equally hideous offspring. I always passed by those clumsy gods and goddesses and sat down to rest beside a pool from where I could admire the beautiful granite vase and the majestic architecture of the Mikhailovsky castle.

Nearing the place where the main alley is crossed by a smaller one, and where Saturn, surrounded by gods and goddesses, is depicted devouring his child, I almost stumbled over a living person in a soiled smock of ticking who was sitting on a bucket directly opposite Saturn.

I halted. The boy (for he was really but a lad of fourteen or fifteen) looked around and began to hide something inside his shirt-front. I came closer and asked what he was doing there.

"I'm not doing anything," he replied shyly, "I'm on my way to work and I stepped into the park on the way." Then, after a moment's silence, he added: "I was drawing."

"Show me what you drew."

He pulled out a sheet of grey stationary from his shirt-front and shyly handed it to me. On the sheet the outline of Saturn had been copied fairly faithfully.

I held the drawing in my hands for a long time and feasted my eyes on the smudged face of the author. There was something attractive in his thin, irregular features, especially in his eyes, which were intelligent and meek as a girl's.

"Do you often come here to draw?" I asked him.

"Every Sunday," he answered, "and if we happen to be working close by, I come on week-days too."

"Are you learning house painting?"

"Also the finer arts," he added.

"To whom are you apprenticed?"

"To mural painter Shirayev[77]."

I wanted to question him in greater detail, but he picked up the bucket with yellow paint and a large yellow brush, that had been wiped dry, and started to leave.

"Where are you hurrying so?"

"To work. I'm already late, and when the master comes, he'll make it hot for me."

"Come to see me Sunday morning, and if you have any drawings you did yourself, bring them to show me."

"I'll come, but where do you live?"

I wrote my address down on his sketch and we parted.

Early on Sunday morning I returned from an all-night promenade and in the hallway before the door of my apartment I was met by my new acquaintance, no longer in a soiled smock of ticking but in something resembling a frock-coat of a brown colour, and with a roll of paper in his hand. I greeted him and extended my hand to him. He sprang to my hand and attempted to kiss it. I snatched my hand away, embarrassed by his slavishness. Without a word I went into my apartment while he remained in the hallway. I took off my coat, put on a smock, lighted a cigar, and he still hadn't entered the room. I walked out into the hallway and looked about, but my friend had disappeared; I went downstairs and asked the care-taker whether he had seen such a person. "I saw him," said he, "a young fellow with papers in his hand, he ran out to the street." I went out to the street but found no trace of him. Sadness came upon me as though I had lost something dear to me. I was dispirited all week until the following Sunday and couldn't puzzle out what the sudden flight of my friend could have meant. When Sunday arrived at last, I went to Troitsky Bridge at two o'clock in the morning and after enjoying the sunrise I went to the Summer Gardens, traversed all the alleys—but my friend was nowhere about. I was on the point of going home when I remembered the Belvedere Apollo, that is, the travesty of the Belvedere god that stands by itself next to the Moika canal. I went there—and there was my friend. Seeing me, he stopped drawing and blushed to the ears like a child caught stealing cookies. I took him by his trembling hand and led him like an offender to the tavern, ordering the waiter to bring us tea as we passed him.

I showed my friend all the kindness I knew how, and when he calmed down I asked him why he had run away from the hallway.

"You were angry with me and I got frightened," he replied.

"To be angry with you was farthest from my mind," I told him, "but your grovelling was unpleasant to me. Only a dog licks hands, a human being should not do it." This strong expression so affected my friend that he seized my hand again. I laughed and he turned red as a lobster and stood silent with his head bowed.

After drinking our tea we parted. At parting I told him that he must call on me without fail either this very day or next Sunday.

I don't have the happy faculty to take a person's measure quickly but instead I have the unhappy facility to quickly become friendly with a person. I say "unhappy" because it is a rare quick friendship that doesn't cost me dear, especially when it's with one-eyed or squint-eyed persons. Those one-eyed and squint-eyed ones have given me plenty of trouble! How many of them I've come in contact with, yet I haven't met a single decent one, they're all bad!—or is it just my luck to have met that sort?

I saw my new acquaintance only three times and already I had become attached to him, developed a liking for him. And truly, there was something in his features that you couldn't help liking. His face, which seemed homely at first, appeared more and more attractive as time went on. There are such fortunate faces on the earth!

I went directly home so that my friend shouldn't have to wait in the hallway. I walked up the stairs and there he was already, in that same brown frock-coat, washed, combed and smiling.

"You're quite the nimble-foot," I said, "because you stopped at your quarters on the way, didn't you? How did you manage to do it so quickly?"

"Well," he answered, "I hurried to be home before the master returns from Mass."

"Why, is your master strict?" I inquired.

"Strict and...."

"And cruel, is that what you meant to say?"

"No, I was going to say that he's mean. He would beat

me but actually he would be glad that I had missed my dinner."

We entered the room. On my easel was a copy I had done of a painting by old Velasquez that was on exhibition at the Stroganov Gallery, and his eyes fastened on it. I took the roll from his hands, unfolded it and began to inspect it. Everything that disfigures the Summer Gardens was there, from the frivolous, sweetly smiling goddesses to the hideous Phraclitus and Heraclitus, and at the very end there were several drawings of bas-reliefs which adorn certain dwellings, including the bas-reliefs of the Cupids that decorate the house of the architect Monferrant, which is on the corner of the Moika embankment and Fonarny lane.

What struck me about these outlines was their remarkable similarity to the originals, especially the sketches of Phraclitus and Heraclitus. They were more expressive and, truth to tell, uglier than the originals, but nevertheless you couldn't look at the drawings with indifference.

At heart I was glad over my find. At that time the idea didn't even cross my mind to ask myself what I would do with my diamond in the rough in view of my more than limited resources. Actually, the thought did cross my mind even then, but was immediately pushed aside with the proverb: "God is not without mercy, and a Cossack is not without luck."

"Why don't you have a single drawing with shadings?" I asked, returning the roll to him.

"I drew all those sketches early in the morning, before sunrise."

"So you have never seen them in the light?"

"I've gone to look at them in the day-time, but you can't draw then, with people walking about."

"What do you intend to do now: stay and have dinner with me, or go home?"

He was silent for a minute and then, without lifting his eyes, said almost indistinctly:

"I would rather stay, if you let me."

"And how will you square it with your master afterward?"

"I'll tell him that I was asleep in the garret."

"Then let's go to dinner."

When we arrived there were as yet no customers at Madame Jurgens' place, of which I was very glad because it would have been annoying to have some smooth-faced official smirking stupidly as he inspected my friend who was far from being a dandy.

After dinner I had intended to take him to the Academy and show him *The Last Days of Pompeii*, but then decided not to give him everything at once. After we had dined I proposed that we either take a promenade on the boulevard or read a book. He chose the latter and I made him read aloud in order to see how well he could read. I fell asleep on the first page of Dickens' famous novel *Nicholas Nickleby*, but neither the author nor the reader were to blame for this—I simply couldn't stay awake because I hadn't slept at night.

When I awoke and went into the next room, my usually chaotic study was pleasant to behold: there were no cigar butts or tobacco ashes anywhere to be seen, everything was tidied up and swept clean, even the palette, which hung on a nail, with dried paints on it, was cleaned and glistened like glass; meanwhile, the person who had created all this harmony sat by the window drawing the mask of Thorvaldsen's famous model, Fortunata.

All this was exceedingly pleasant to me. Those services clearly spoke in his favour. However, I don't know why I didn't let him notice my satisfaction. I corrected the sketch he was doing, put in shadows, and then we left for the *Kapernaum* for tea. *Kapernaum* is another name for Berlin tavern on the corner of the Sixth Line and the Academy Lane—that's how it was named, I believe, by Pimenov during his boisterous student days.

While we were having tea, he told me the story of his life. It was a sad, mournful tale, but he told it naively and simply, without a shadow of complaint or reproach. Until that confession I had been thinking how to improve his education, but after hearing the confession I even stopped thinking about it: he was a serf.

That sad discovery so set me aback that I lost all hope

of his education. The silence lasted for at least half ar hour. He shook me out of my stupor with his sobs. I glanced at him and asked why he was crying.

"It is disagreeable to you that I...."

He didn't finish the sentence and burst into tears. Again I reassured him as best I could and we returned to my apartment.

Along the way we met old Venetsianov.[78] After the first greetings he looked intently at my companion and asked, smiling good-naturedly:

"Wouldn't that be a future artist?"

"Yes and no," I told him. He asked the reason. I explained to him in a whisper. The old man stood lost in thought for a moment, then he pressed my hand and we parted.

It was as though with his glance and the pressure of his hand Venetsianov was reproaching me for my lack of faith. I took heart, and recalling some of the artists who were Venetsianov's pupils and wards, I began to see—very vaguely, it is true—something like hope on the horizon.

Taking his leave in the evening, my protégé begged me to give him a print which he could copy. As it happened, I had a copy of the recently printed *Farnese Hercules*, engraved by Slyudzhinsky from the drawing by Zavyalov, and also Losenko's *Apollo*. I wrapped the originals in a sheet of Peterhof paper, supplied him with Italian pencils, instructed him how to keep them from hardening, and we went out on the street. He then went home and I went to old Venetsianov's place.

This isn't the place and it's not to the point to expatiate here on that humanitarian artist. Let that be done by one of his numerous pupils, who know in more detail than I all his magnanimous deeds in the field of the arts.

I told the old man everything I knew about my godsend and asked him to advise me what to do in the future to bring the matter to the desired conclusion. As a man practised in matters of that sort, he didn't promise anything or give any definite advice. He only counsel-

led me to get acquainted with his master and as far as possible to ease his present difficult circumstances.

That's what I did. Without waiting for Sunday, I went to the Summer Gardens before sunrise the next day. But, alas, I didn't find my friend there, nor the next, nor the day after that, so I resolved to wait and see what Sunday would bring.

On Sunday morning my friend appeared and, when I questioned him, told me that they had started work in the Bolshoi Theatre (at that time Kavoss was engaged in renovating the interior of the Bolshoi Theatre) and for that reason he could no longer visit the Summer Gardens.

We spent that Sunday much the same as we had the previous one. In the evening, when we were parting, I asked the name of his master and the hours when he was present at the job.

Next day I went to the Bolshoi Theatre and got acquainted with his master. I praised inordinately the sketches for the murals which he himself designed, and in this way laid a firm foundation for our acquaintance.

He was a guildmaster of the painters' guild, he continually kept three and sometimes four novices in smocks of ticking, whom he called pupils, and whenever necessary hired from one to ten Kostroma muzhiks—painters and glass-cutters—by the day or the month; consequently he wasn't the poorest master in his guild either in art or in capital. Apart from the above-mentioned qualities, I saw several engravings by Audran and Volpato on his walls and on his chest of drawers several volumes of books, including *The Travels of Anacharsis the Younger.* This raised my spirits. But alas, when I gently hinted to him about improving the lot of his pupils in ticking, he was amazed at such a crazy idea and tried to convince me that that would only lead to their own ruination.

The first time I did not contradict him, and anyway, it would have been useless to attempt to convince him otherwise: people who are backward and interested only in material gains, who lived their youthful years in scarcity and dirt, underwent severe trials, yet somehow managed to crawl out into the divine sunlight, such people don't

believe any theory; for them there can be no other path to well-being except the one they travelled themselves, and often in addition to those crude convictions there is added a feeling that is cruder still: nobody, so to say, made things easy for me, so why should I make things easy for somebody else?

This master of the painters' guild, it seems, was not a stranger to such anti-humanist feelings. In time, however, I managed to talk him into not hindering my protégé from visiting me on holidays and on those week-days when there was no work, in winter, for example. Although he agreed, he still looked on it as over-indulgence that could lead to absolutely nothing but ruination. He almost guessed right, at that.

Summer and autumn passed, and winter arrived. The work in the Bolshoi Theatre was finished, the theatre opened, and the enchantress Taglioni began to work her magic. The youth were in the seventh heaven, while the oldsters were, to put it bluntly, possessed. Only strict matrons and desperate lionesses stubbornly sulked even during the most unrestrained applause and contemptuously passed judgement: *Mauvais genre,*—while unapproachable female puritans chorused: "Depravity! Depravity! Open public depravity!" And yet the bigots and hypocrites didn't miss a single show of Taglioni's. And when the celebrated artiste consented to become the Princess Trubetskoi, they were the first to mourn the great loss and condemned the woman for that which they themselves couldn't achieve despite all the help that cosmetics could give them.

Karl the Great (that's how the late Vassily Andreyevich Zhukovsky called the also late Karl Pavlovich Bryullov[79]) had a boundless love for all the fine arts, no matter what form they took, but he was practically indifferent to the modern ballet, and if he ever spoke of the ballet it was always as of sugary frippery. To crown her triumph Taglioni danced the cachucha from the ballet *Khitana.* That same evening the cachucha spread all over our Palmira, and next day it already held sway both in the palace of the aristocrat and in the modest abode of the Kolomna clerk. Everywhere the cachucha—in the home,

on the street, at the workbench, in the tavern, at dinner and at supper—in a word, everywhere and all the time, the cachucha. I'm not talking about the soirées and socials, where the cachucha became indispensable. All that's nothing yet—everything suits youth and beauty—but esteemed mothers and sedate fathers of families also joined in. It was, to put it bluntly, a St. Vitus dance epidemic in the shape of the cachucha. The fathers and mothers soon came to their senses, but arrayed their wee ones, who were barely beginning to walk, in khitana tunics. Poor youngsters, how many tears you shed because of that accursed cachucha! However, the effect was complete—an effect leading to speculation. For example, if the amphitryon lacked a cherub of its own, the social evening was adorned with a rented khitana cherub. It was not long ago, but already it's hard to believe!

At the very apex of this cachuchomania, Karl the Great paid me a visit (he loved to visit his pupils). He sat down on the couch and fell into a reverie. I silently admired his intelligent curly head. After a minute he quickly raised his eyes, laughed and asked me:

"Do you know what?"

"No, I don't," I replied.

"Today Guber (the translator of *Faust*) promised to get me tickets for *Khitana*. Let us go."

"In that case send your Lukyan to Guber and tell him to get two tickets."

"Couldn't the lad go?" he said, pointing to my protégé.

"Certainly he'll go, write the note."

On a piece of grey paper he wrote with an Italian pencil: "Get two tickets. K. Bryullov." To this laconic message I added my address and my Mercury flew off.

"What is he, a model or a servant?" he asked, pointing to the closed door.

"Neither the one, nor the other," I replied.

"I like his face—it's not the face of a serf."

"Far from a serf's face, and yet..." I broke off.

"And yet he is a serf?" he picked up my thought.

"Unfortunately, that is so," I added.

"Barbarism!" he whispered and went into a reverie.

After a minute's contemplation he threw his cigar to the floor, took his hat and went out, but immediately returned and said:

"I'll wait for him: I would like to take another look at his face." And lighting a cigar he said: "Show me his work."

"Who told you that I have his work?"

"You must have it," he said emphatically.

I showed him the finished drawing of the mask of Laocoon and a copy of a work by Michelangelo which had barely been sketched. He looked long at the drawings, that is, he held the drawings in his hands and looked—but God knows where he was looking at that moment.

"Who is his master?" he asked, raising his head.

I gave him the landowner's name.

"We'll have to give a lot of thought to your pupil. Lukyan promised to treat me to a roast beef, come to dinner."

Saying this, he went to the door and then stopped again:

"Bring him to my place some time. Good-bye!"

And he left.

A quarter of an hour later my Mercury returned and reported that Guber would go to Karl Pavlovich himself.

"Do you know who Karl Pavlovich is?" I asked him.

"I do," he replied. "Only I've never actually seen him."

"And today?"

"Was that he?"

"It was."

"Why didn't you tell me?" he asked after a moment of silence. "At least I would have taken a good look at him, but I thought he was some ordinary gentleman. Won't he visit you another time?"

"I don't know," I told him, and began to dress.

"My God, my God! If I could only see him, even from a distance! Do you know," he continued, "when I walk along the street I always think of him and keep looking at the passers-by, trying to find him among them. You say that his portrait, the one in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, is a very good likeness?"

"It is, and yet you didn't recognise him when he was here. Well, don't feel bad, if he doesn't drop in to see me by Sunday, you and I will pay him a visit. In the meantime, here's a coupon for Madame Jurgens's for you. I'm not having dinner at home today."

Having given these instructions, I left.

At Bryullov's studio I found V. A. Zhukovsky and Count M. Y. Vyelgorsky. They were admiring the unfinished *Crucifixion of Christ*, painted for the Lutheran church of Peter and Paul. The head of the weeping Mary Magdalene was finished, and Zhukovsky, gazing at that marvellous weeping beauty, himself wept and put his arms around Karl Pavlovich, as though he were embracing the beauty he had created.

I often had occasion to visit the Hermitage when Bryullov was there. Those occasions provided brilliant lectures on the theory of painting and they ended every time with Teniers and especially his *Barracks*. He usually stopped long in front of that painting and, after a moving, heartfelt eulogy of that remarkable Flemish artist, he would say: "One could travel all the way from America just to see that one painting." The same can now be said of his own *Crucifixion* and especially of the head of the sobbing Mary Magdalene.

After the hugging and kissing, Zhukovsky went into another room. Noticing me, Bryullov smiled, then followed Zhukovsky. Half an hour later they returned to the studio and Bryullov, approaching me, said with a smile: "The foundation has been laid." At that same moment the door flew open and Guber walked in, no longer in a travelling suit but in a dandified black frock-coat. He had barely managed to exchange greetings when Zhukovsky approached him and warmly pressing his hand asked him to read the final scene from *Faust*, which Guber proceeded to do. The impression he created was enormous, and the poet was rewarded by the sincere embrace of the other poet. Soon after Zhukovsky and Count Vyelgorsky left the studio, Guber, with more elbow-room now, read us his new-born *Terpsichore*, after which Bryullov said:

"I definitely won't go to see *Khitana*."

"Why?" asked Guber.

"In order to keep my faith in your Terpsichore,"

"How's that?"

"It is better to believe in a beautiful invention than...."

"What you are trying to say," the poet interrupted, "is that my verse surpasses the divine Taglioni. I swear to God that it isn't worth the nail of her little finger! By the way, I almost forgot to tell you: today we're eating macaroni and stofatto with Lachryma Christi at Alexander's. Nestor will be there, Misha, et cetera, and to top it off, Pyanenko. Let us be off!"

Bryullov took his hat.

"Oh yes! I had forgotten..." Guber continued, taking tickets from his pocket, "here are your tickets, and after the show, off to Nestor at the Exchange." (That's how they jokingly referred to the literary evenings at N. Kukolnik's).

"I haven't forgotten," Bryullov replied and, putting on his hat, he handed me a ticket.

"Will you be coming with us?" asked Guber, turning to me.

"I'm with you," I replied.

"Off we go!" said Guber, and we went out into the corridor. Closing the door behind us, Lukyan muttered:

"So much for the roast beef!"

After the macaroni, stofatto and Lachryma Christi, the company departed for "the Exchange", while we, that is, Guber, Karl the Great and I, went to the theatre. While waiting for the overture I admired my protégé's art. (He had sketched all the decorations and arabesques that ornamented the Bolshoi Theatre under the direction of the architect Kavoss. I was informed of this not by himself, nor by his grasping guildmaster, but by the engineer, Kartashov, who was continually present at the job and early every morning treated my protégé to tea.) I had intended to tell Bryullov about my pupil's arabesques, but the overture came on, and everybody, including me, riveted their eyes on the curtain. The overture ended, the curtain quivered and then rose, and the ballet began.

Until the cachucha everything went well: the audience conducted itself like any gathering of well-bred people. But with the first click of the castanets it was as though they had been jolted out of their seats and began quivering with excitement. Applause rippled through the auditorium, at first muffled like the roll of faraway thunder, then louder and louder, until the cachucha ended to the full thunder of the storm. The well-bred audience, including me, sinner that I am, went mad and began to roar, each according to his preference: some "Bravo!" others "*Da capo!*", and some just bellowed wordlessly, working their hands and feet the while. After the first paroxysm had abated I glanced at Karl Bryullov and there the poor fellow was, clapping his hands and pounding his feet and hollering at the top of his voice: "*Da capo!*" Guber also. I took a deep breath and rejoined my teacher in his exertions. Finally the hurricane began to calm down little by little and the sorceress, having been called out to take a bow for the tenth time, flitted on to the stage, curtsied most gracefully several times, and then disappeared. Karl the Great rose, wiped the perspiration from his forehead and, turning to Guber, said:

"Let us go backstage. You must introduce me to her."

"Let's go," said Guber rapturously, and we went backstage. Behind the curtains swarmed a crowd of her worshippers, consisting mainly of venerable bald-heads, spectacles and binoculars. We joined them and not without some difficulty made our way to the centre. And heavens, what we saw there! The enchantress, who had flitted about light as a zephyr, was lying back on a settee with her mouth open, her nostrils dilated like those of an Arabian steed, and powder and rouge, mixed with perspiration, running down her face like muddy streams in the springtime.

"Disgusting!" said Karl the Great and turned back. I followed him, while poor Guber—truly he was left in an unenviable position!—had barely uttered a compliment equal to the occasion and, pronouncing Bryullov's name, glanced behind him, when he discovered that Bryullov

had disappeared. I don't know how he extricated himself from that predicament.

There was one act of the ballet remaining, but we left the theatre in order, as Bryullov expressed it, not to spoil the dessert with cabbage. I don't know whether he ever attended the ballet after *Khitana*, I only know that he never spoke of the ballet.

But to return to the hero of my tale. After Bryullov had told me that "the foundation has been laid", hope began to take more definite form in my imagination. I began to think how best to direct the training of my pupil in view of my paltry personal finances. I thought of the Gallery of Ancient Arts. Andrei Grigoryevich, the supervisor, would have readily agreed to let him work there, but the statues in that gallery are so poorly lighted that it is impossible to draw them. After lengthy consideration I approached the male model, Taras, a living Antinous, with the request that he allow my pupil to work in the plaster class-room at times when there were no classes. That's what we did. During one week (he even had his lunch there) he drew the head of Lucius Verus, the dissolute confidant of Marcus Aurelius, and the head of Canova's *The Genius*. Then I transferred him to the figure class and told him for the beginning to draw a human anatomy from four sides. Whenever I was free I visited the class-room and treated my tireless toiler to a pound of white bread and a piece of sausage, while customarily he lunched on a piece of black bread with water—if Taras brought some water. Occasionally I would be so carried away with admiration of the Belvedere torso that I too would sit down to draw. What a marvellous masterpiece of ancient culture! No wonder that the blind Michelangelo, feeling it with his fingers, was enraptured by this bit of Hercules at rest. And it is odd that a certain gentleman named Gersevanov in the account of his travel impressions so correctly evaluates the pedantic work of Michelangelo, *Judgement Day*, the frescoes of the divine Raphael and many other notable works of sculpture and painting, but in the

Belvedere torso he sees nothing but a hunk of marble. Strange!

After the anatomy course he drew a sketch of Germanicus and a dancing faun, and then one beautiful morning I introduced him to Karl the Great. When Bryullov kindly and indulgently praised his drawings, his transports of delight were indescribable.

I have never seen a happier or more joyful person in all my life than he was during the days that followed.

"Is he always so kind and good?" he asked me time and again.

"Always," I replied.

"And that red room, is that his favourite?"

"Yes, that's his favourite room," I replied.

"Everything red! The room is red, the divan is red, the curtains on the windows are red, his dressing-gown is red and the painting is red—everything red! Will I ever see him so close again?"

After that question he would begin to sob. Naturally, I did not try to comfort him. After all, what words of sympathy or comfort could be more healing than those happy, heavenly, divine tears? "Everything red!" he kept repeating through his tears.

Accustomed to that sort of interior decoration, I was moved only for a minute by the red room, which was hung with costly Oriental weapons and lighted by the sun through transparent scarlet curtains, but he kept the memory of it to his grave. After long and frightful trials he forgot everything—his art, his spiritual life, his love that had poisoned him, and me, his true friend—he forgot everything else, but his last words were of Karl Pavlovich and the red decorations.

I met Karl Pavlovich the day following our visit and he asked me the name and address of his master. I told him. Then he took a horse-cab and left, saying to me: "Come tonight!"

That evening I went to him.

"That's the biggest swine in satin slippers!" Those were the words with which Karl Pavlovich greeted me.

"What's the matter?" I asked, guessing to whom he was referring.

"The matter is that tomorrow you'll have to go to that amphibian and get him to name his price for your pupil."

Karl the Great was out of sorts. For a long time he paced the room in silence, then spat and muttered, "Vandalism!"

"Let us go upstairs," he added, turning to me, and we silently went to the upstairs apartment where he had his bedroom, library and dining-room.

He ordered a lamp to be brought and asked me to read something aloud while he himself sat down to finish a painting—the sepia *The Sleeping Odalisque,* which he was doing, I believe, for the Vladislavlev album.

Our peaceful occupations, however, did not last long. Apparently, he was still haunted by the swine in satin slippers.

"Let's go outside," he said, putting away his painting.

We went out and walked along the river bank for a long time, finally coming out on the Bolshoi avenue.

"Is he at your place now?" he inquired.

"No," I replied, "he doesn't stay overnight at my place."

"Well, then let's go to supper."

And we went to Deli's.

I have seen many varieties of Russian landowners in my life, the wealthy, the middling and the gentlemen farmers. I have even seen the kind that live continually in France or England and speak with admiration about how well off the farmers and peasants are in those countries, while in their own country they rob the peasant of his last sheep. I had seen many characters of that sort, but I had never before seen a Russian who would be rude to Karl Bryullov in his own home.

My curiosity was strongly aroused and for a long time I couldn't fall asleep for wondering what the swine in satin slippers had done. However, my curiosity cooled off when I began to put on my frock-coat the next morning. Good sense took over. My good sense told me that the given swine wasn't such an interesting rarity that on its account

I should sacrifice my own self-respect, although the cause demanded considerable sacrifice. But the question was, what would happen if I couldn't stand up to the torture any more than my teacher had?

After brief consideration I took off my frock-coat, donned my everyday overcoat and went to old Venetsianov. He was experienced in such affairs and probably had had many encounters with such characters, from which encounters he had emerged with honour.

I found Venetsianov already at work. He was making an India-ink drawing of his own painting, *A Mother Teaching Her Child to Pray.* That drawing was intended for Vladislavlev's album *The Dawn.*

I explained the reason for my untimely visit, gave him the amphibian's address, and the old man left his work, dressed, and we went out to the street. He drove off in a horse-drawn cab, while I returned to my apartment where I found my happy, cheerful pupil. But it was as though his happiness and cheerfulness were under some sort of shadow. He was like a person who wants to share some great secret but is afraid that it would cease to be a secret. Even before I took off my topcoat and put on my smock, I saw something was wrong with my friend.

"Well, what's new with you?" I asked. "What did you do last night? How is your master?"

"The master is so-so," answered he, stammering. "I read *Andrei Savoyar* until everybody fell asleep and then I lighted the candle you gave me and I drew."

"What did you draw?" I asked him. "Did you copy something or draw without a model?"

"Just so," he said, blushing. "I recently read Ozerov's works and I took a liking to *Oedipus in Athens,* so I tried to compose...."

"That's fine. Did you bring your composition with you? Show it to me."

He took a small roll of paper from his pocket, unrolled it with trembling fingers and handed it to me, muttering:

"I didn't have time to outline it with a pen."

This was the first creative work of his own which he had nerved himself to show to me after such great

difficulty. I liked his modesty, or rather, bashfulness: that's a sure sign of talent. I also liked the work itself on account of its simplicity: Oedipus, Antigone and in the background, Polinices, three figures in all. Such laconism is rarely met in early attempts, which always contain numerous figures. Youthful imagination does not limit itself and concentrate on one eloquent word, one note, or one line, but demands expanse, it soars, and in its flight it often gets entangled, falls and is smashed against adamant laconism.

I praised him for his choice of scene and advised him to read history in addition to poetry, and above all, to more diligently copy fine prints, such as Raphael's or Volpato's, for example, or Poussin's, or Audran's. "Your master has those and others, so copy them whenever you have free time, while I will supply you with books." And then and there I gave him several volumes of Gillies' *History of Ancient Greece.*

Accepting the books, he said: "Besides those that hang on the walls, my master has a full portfolio of prints, but he won't permit me to copy them: he's afraid I will damage them." And smiling, he continued: "By the way, I told him that you took me to Karl Pavlovich and showed him my sketches and that..." here he began to stammer, "that he... but then, I don't believe it myself."

"What's that?" I caught him up. "He doesn't believe that Bryullov praised your drawings?"

"He doesn't even believe that I saw Karl Pavlovich, and when I assured him that I had, he called me a fool."

He was going to say more but at that moment Venetsianov entered the room and taking off his hat, said with a smile:

"Nothing exceptional! A landowner as landowners go! He made me wait about an hour in the ante-chamber, it is true, but that's a custom of theirs. What can you do, a custom is a law. He saw me in his study. Now, I didn't like that study of his. It is true that everything in it is luxurious, expensive and magnificent, but it is all magnificent in the Japanese manner. I began by speaking of enlightenment in general and of philanthropy in particu-

lar. He listened to me for a long time silently and attentively, but at last he interrupted me: 'Tell me straight and simply what it is that you and your Bryullov want from me. He upset me yesterday. He's a regular American savage!' And he laughed loudly. At first I was taken aback but quickly recovered and explained my business calmly and simply.

"'You should have said so a long time ago, instead of carrying on about philanthropy! There's no philanthropy involved in this! Money and nothing else!' he added smugly. 'So you want to know the rock-bottom price? Have I understood you correctly?'

"'Exactly,' I replied.

"'My bottom price is 2,500 rubles! Is it a deal?'

"'Agreed,' I replied.

"'He's a craftsman,' he continued, 'and he's needed around the house....' He wanted to say something more, but I bowed and left. And here I am," added the old man smiling.

"I thank you heartily."

"And I thank you heartily!" he said, firmly pressing my hand. "You provided me with the opportunity to do something for our fine arts and also to see at last an odd fish that calls our great Karl an American savage." And the old man laughed good-naturedly.

"I have contributed my mite," he said when he stopped laughing, "and now it's up to you. In case of failure I'll have to turn to the English gambling club again. *Au revoir!*"

"Let us go together to Karl Pavlovich," I suggested.

"I won't go and I don't advise you to do it. Remember the saying, 'a visitor at the wrong time is worse than a Tatar', the more so when you're dealing with an artist and especially in the morning—that's worse than an entire horde of Tatars."

"You are making me blush for this morning," I mumbled.

"Not at all. You acted like a genuine Christian. We have definite times for work and for rest, but there is no special time set aside for good deeds. I thank you heartily

once more for this morning's visit. *Au revoir!* We are dining at home today, please join us. If you see the Belvedere, bring him along," he added on leaving. The Belvedere was a nickname he had for Apollon Nikolayevich Mokritsky, a pupil of Bryullov's and a passionate admirer of Schiller.

I parted with Venetsianov on the street and went to inform Karl Pavlovich of the outcome of our diplomacy, but alas, I didn't even find Lukyan at home. Fortunately Lypyn looked out from the kitchen and told me that they had gone to the portico. (Portico was what we called the building back of the present Academy Garden where the workshops of Bryullov, Baron Klodt, Sauerweid and Bassin were located.) I came to the street through the Liteiny yard and, passing Dovicelli's shop, saw the curly-headed profile of Karl the Great in the window. Seeing me, he came out on the street.

"Well?" he asked.

"Where are you dining today?" I inquired.

"I don't know. Why do you ask?"

"Here's what," I said. "Let's go to Venetsianov's for dinner. He will tell you such wonders about the amphibian as you have probably never heard before and never will again."

"All right, let us go," he said, and we went to Venetsianov's.

At the dinner table the old man told the story of that day's visit and when he came to the part about the American savage, we all guffawed and the dinner ended in hysterical laughter.

The Society for the Encouragement of Artists rented large quarters in Kastyurin's house on the Seventh Line between the Bolshoi and Sredny avenues for its five scholarship students. Apart from the rooms taken by the students, there were also two class-rooms decorated with ancient statues—of Venus de Medici, Apollo, Germanicus and a group of gladiators. This was the haven I picked for my pupil in place of the plaster class under the patronage of Taras, the model. Apart from the above-

mentioned statues, there was also a human skeleton, and study of the skeleton was all the more imperative for him since he had taken to drawing the figure statue of Fisher from memory without any idea of human bone structure.

With this good end in mind, the day following the dinner at Venetsianov's I paid a visit to V. I. Grigorovich, who was then secretary of the Society, and asked his permission for my pupil to make use of the class-rooms.

Vassily Ivanovich obligingly gave me an entrance card in the shape of a note to the artist Golovnya who was living together with the students as their overseer.

It is hardly worth while to spend any time on such a miserable being as the artist Golovnya, but since he is a rare phenomenon, especially, among artists, I'll devote a few words to him.

The strong, sharply delineated figure of Plyushkin[80] pales before this anti-artist Golovnya. Plyushkin at any rate had youth and consequently also joyousness, even if not complete, exultant joyousness, yet joyousness of sorts, while this poor fellow didn't possess anything even resembling youth and joy.

He had been a scholarship student of the Society for the Encouragement of Artists and when he set about fulfilling the programme for the second gold medal in the Academy of Arts contest (the subject was: Adam and Eve beside the dead body of their son, Abel), he found that he needed a female model in order to do the painting, but in St. Petersburg at that time it was not easy to get such a model, the main reason being that it cost a lot. The fellow scented a business deal and went to the then president of the Society for the Encouragement of Artists Kikin, who was a generous patron of the artists, to ask for assistance, that is, for money with which to hire a model. Receiving a hundred-ruble bill, he sewed it up in the mattress, using a doll, such as painters have for draperies, as the model for the first-to-be-created beauty.

Whoever knows what a gold medal means to a young artist will understand the repulsiveness of the petty spirit of this stingy youth. Plyushkin does not even come near him.

It was to this moral monster that I presented, together with the note, my morally pure foundling.

That first day I myself took the skeleton from the cupboard, set it on a chair in a pose of extreme debauchery, and having charted the general position of the skeleton with light strokes, I bade my pupil to sketch in the particulars.

Two days later I compared his drawing with the lithographed anatomical drawings of Bassin with great satisfaction, finding his particulars to be the more precise and accurate.

Of course, perhaps the magnifying glass through which I looked on my foundling was responsible for that. Be that as it may, I liked his drawing.

He continued to draw the skeleton in various positions and also, under the patronage of the male model, Taras, the statue of Midas, who was hanged by Apollo.

In the normal course of events winter was passing and spring was drawing near. My pupil became noticeably thinner, paler and more thoughtful.

"What's wrong with you?" I asked him. "Aren't you well?"

"I'm well," he answered mournfully.

"Why are you crying?"

"I'm not crying, only...."

And the tears streamed from his expressive, fine eyes. I couldn't make out the meaning of all this and was beginning to think that perhaps his virginal young heart had been struck by one of Cupid's arrows, when one almost spring-like morning he told me that he wouldn't be able to visit me daily as work would commence the coming Monday and he would have to paint fences again.

I tried to cheer him up as best I could, but I didn't even hint to him about Karl Pavlovich's intentions, especially since I myself didn't know anything for certain that would be sufficient foundation on which to build up his hopes.

On Sunday I visited his guildmaster to suggest whether it wouldn't be possible to have a common house painter do the work in place of my pupil.

"Why not? It can be done," he said, "before the fine painting jobs begin, but after that, you'll have to excuse me!—he's a graphic artist, and you yourself know what that means in our profession. But do you suppose," he continued, "that he'll find the means to hire a workman in his place?"

"I'll hire the worker for you."

"You?" he asked me with astonishment. "But what pleasure or profit do you derive from that?"

"Oh, I do it just out of boredom," I replied, "just for my own amusement."

"Fine amusement—to throw money away for nothing! You must be loaded with money." Then, smiling smugly, he said: "How much do you charge, for instance, for a portrait?"

"It depends on the portrait and on the customer," I answered, guessing what he was leading up to. "From you, for example, I wouldn't take more than a hundred rubles."

"No, no, sir, charge whomever you will a hundred iron men, but you'll be lucky to get ten from me."

"Then let's do it this way," I told him, stretching out my hand, "let your graphic artist off for a couple of months and you'll have a portrait."

"A couple?" he muttered thoughtfully, "that's too long, I couldn't do it. But I could for one month."

"So let it be for one month then, it's a deal," said I and we shook hands as traders do in the market-place.

"When do we begin?" he asked me.

"Tomorrow, if you like," I replied, putting on my hat.

"Where are you off to? How about sealing the bargain with a drink?"

"No, thank you, we can have a drink at the end of the month. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

What does one fleeting month of freedom mean among many long and difficult years of slavery? A grain of sand in the desert! I enjoyed watching him during that happy month. His expressive youthful face shone with such joy, such complete happiness, that I, the Lord forgive me,

envied him. His poor but neat and clean suit seemed stylish to me, while his frieze overcoat appeared to be made of wool and of the very finest Riga wool at that. During lunch at Madame Jurgens' nobody looked askance, first at him and then at me—evidently I was not the only one to note such a happy transformation in him.

On one of those happy days we were strolling together to Madame Jurgens' place when we met Karl Pavlovich on the Bolshoi Avenue.

"Where are you going?" he asked us.

"To Madame Jurgens," I replied.

"I'll go with you. Suddenly, I have an appetite," he said and turned with us into the Third Line.

Once in a while, when he had the leisure, Karl the Great liked to visit Madame Jurgens: it wasn't that he liked the complaisant Madame Jurgens herself or her maid Olimpiada who had been the late Petrovsky's model for Agar, but that as a genuine artist he liked our diversified company. There he could see a poor clerk of a Senate department in his only, threadworn uniform, a pale and lanky university student treating himself to a lavish lunch at Madame Jurgens' with the coin he received from a wealthy merry-making fellow-student for copying Fisher's lectures for him. He saw very many things there which he couldn't have seen at either the Dumet or the St. George restaurants. Whenever he appeared, however, the attentive Madame Jurgens offered him a covered table in a private room and some quickly prepared special food, which he like a true socialist always turned down. But he did not refuse this time and ordered a table to be laid for three in a separate room and sent Olimpiada to Fox for a bottle of Jackson's.

Madame Jurgens was in transports—she began running and bustling about, and almost tore off her new wig along with her cap when she remembered that she ought to change her head-dress for such a valuable guest.

And for her he was a valuable guest indeed. From the very first day that he visited her, customers multiplied with every day. And what customers! Not small fry—artists, or students, or two-for-a-penny Senate clerks, but

people who ordered a bottle of Médoc and some special sort of steak. And that's quite proper. If they can pay a quarter to see a lady from Amsterdam, why not pay thirty kopecks to get a close look at Bryullov? Madame Jurgens fully understood this and exploited it as much as she was able to.

My pupil sat silently at the table, silently and with growing pallor he drank a glass of Jackson's, silently he pressed the hand of Karl the Great, and he walked to my apartment in silence, but on arriving home he dropped to the floor without undressing and cried the rest of the day and the whole night through.

He still had a week of independence left, but on the second day after the lunch I have described above he rolled up his drawings and without saying a word to me went out. I thought he was going to the Seventh Line as usual and therefore didn't ask him where he was off to. Came the time for lunch—he had not returned, nor had he come home by nightfall. Next day I went to his guildmaster, but he wasn't there either. I became frightened and didn't know what to think. On the third day he came to me in the late afternoon, more pallid and deshevelled than usual.

"Where were you?" I asked. "What's the matter with you, are you sick? Are you unwell?"

"I'm unwell," he replied in a barely audible voice.

I sent the care-taker for Zhadovtsev, a private doctor, and myself proceeded to undress him and put him to bed. He abandoned himself to my ministrations as meekly as a child.

Zhadovtsev felt his pulse and advised me to take him to the hospital. "Because," he explained, "it would be dangerous to treat a fever at home with the means at your disposal."

I took his advice and that very evening I drove my poor pupil to the St. Mary Magdalene hospital which is situated by the Tuchkov Bridge.

Thanks to the influence of Zhadovtsev as a private doctor, my pupil was accepted without the customary formalities. I informed his guildmaster of what had

happened the next day and the form was filled out with all the accessories.

I visited him several times every day and every time I left the hospital I felt sadder and sadder. I had become so accustomed to him, so attached to him, that I didn't know what to do without him. I would cross to the Petersburg side, turn into Petrovsky Park (at that time it had just been started), come out where the Sobolevsky summer cottages are, and again go back to the hospital where he was burning up with fever. I would ask the nurse:

"Well, has he regained consciousness?"

"No, sir."

"Does he rave?"

"He only keeps repeating the word 'red'."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing, sir."

And I would go out into the street again, and again cross Tuchkov Bridge and visit Mr. Sobolevsky's summer cottages, and again return to the hospital. Eight days passed in that manner. On the ninth day he regained consciousness and when I came close he looked at me so intently, so expressively, so tenderly, that I won't forget that glance as long as I live. He wanted to say something to me but couldn't, he tried to give me his hand and only began to weep. I left.

The doctor on duty, whom I met in the corridor, told me that the crisis was past and the strength of youth had pulled him through.

Reassured by the good doctor's words, I went home to my apartment. I lighted a cigar. For some reason the cigar wouldn't smoke well, so I threw it away and went out on the boulevard. Something seemed missing, something was lacking for my peace of mind. I went to the Academy, to Karl Pavlovich's quarters, but he wasn't at home. I walked over to the river bank road and found him standing beside an enormous sphinx and watching a small skiff, loaded with laughing passengers, slipping along the Neva, where the ice had already broken up, leaving a silvery runnel behind it.

"Were you at my studio?" he asked without a preliminary greeting.

"No, I wasn't," I told him.

"Let us go."

We walked in silence to his home studio. There we found Lypyn. He had brought a palette with fresh paints and, sitting in the easy chair, was admiring the still damp background-painting of the portrait of Vassily Andreyevich Zhukovsky. When we entered poor Lypyn sprang up and got embarrassed like a schoolboy caught in a misdemeanour.

"Put away the palette, I won't work today," Karl Pavlovich told Lypyn, and sat in the easy chair. He gazed at his creation for at least half an hour, then turned to me and said:

"His look should be more gentle: his verses are gentle and sweet. Isn't that so?"

Then, not giving me time to answer, he continued:

"Do you know the purpose of that portrait?"

"No, I don't," I replied.

There was another ten minutes of silence. Then he rose, took his hat and spoke:

"Let us go out on the street and I'll tell you the purpose of that portrait."

Coming out on the street, he said:

"I have changed my mind. Such matters aren't talked about beforehand. Moreover," he added, joking, "I am fully convinced that you aren't curious."

"If that's your wish," I said, "let it remain a mystery to me."

"Only until the second sitting. Well, and how is your protégé, is he feeling better?"

"He's beginning to regain his strength."

"Does that mean that the danger is past?"

"At least that's what the doctor says."

"Good-bye," he said, giving me his hand. "I'll look in on Halberg. I doubt that the poor fellow will ever get up," he added sorrowfully and we parted.

I was intensely curious about that mysterious portrait. I vaguely guessed its purpose, but no matter how much I

wanted to get proof for my surmise, I summoned up enough fortitude not even to hint about it to Karl the Great. It is true that one beautiful morning I paid a visit to V. A. Zhukovsky, ostensibly to admire the stiff contours of drawings by Cornelius and Peter Hess, but in reality to ferret out some information about the mysterious portrait. However, I failed.

Klenze, Valhalla, Pinakothek and Münich generally took up the entire morning, so that not even a word was mentioned about Düsseldorf, while the portrait simply didn't exist.

Vassily Andreyevich's rapturous praises of German art were interrupted by the arrival of Count M. Y. Vyelgorsky.

"There's the cause and the reason for your present trouble and bother," Vassily Andreyevich told the Count, pointing to me.

The Count pressed my hand with feeling. I had already phrased a question in my mind when a servant entered and announced an aristocrat whose name was unknown to me. I realised my question was out of place, bowed my good-byes and left with nothing gained.

Meanwhile, the vital forces of youth were winning. Like the hero in the fairy-tale, he revived and grew stronger not by the day but by the hour. A week after his fortnight's bout of fever had left him, he got on his feet and walked, holding on to his bed, but he was so downcast and sad that, despite the doctor's orders not to speak to him of serious matters, I once asked him:

"You're recovering, you're comfortable, yet why are you sad?"

"I'm not sad, I'm happy, but I don't know what it is I want. I would like to read."

I asked the doctor whether he was permitted to read anything.

"Don't give him anything, especially no serious reading matter."

What shall I do with him? I can't sit at his bed-side all the time, and there's no other way I can help him.

As I cast about in my mind, I remembered Albrecht

Dürer's *Perspective* with a Russian interpretation, which I had one time studied and finally given up without making any sense out of it. And strange to say, I remembered Albrecht Dürer's mishmash, but completely forgot about the sensible, fine course in linear perspective by our own Professor Vorobyov. I had sketches of that course in perspective in my briefcase (not in their proper order, it is true). I gathered them together and after talking it over with the doctor I gave them to my pupil along with compasses and a set square, giving him a first lesson in linear perspective there and then. Afterwards, I did not have to explain the second and third lessons in perspective at all: he was recuperating rapidly and he grasped this mathematical science quickly—even though he did not know the four rules of arithmetic, by the way.

The lessons in perspective came to an end. I begged the head doctor to release him from the hospital, but the doctor explained to me that for a complete cure he must remain under doctor's supervision for at least another month. Reluctantly, I agreed.

During that period I often met Karl Pavlovich, and I saw the portrait of Vassily Andreyevich Zhukovsky two or three times after the second sitting. In conversations with Karl Pavlovich I several times detected hints about a secret, but for some inexplicable reason I side-stepped any confidences on his part. It was as though I was afraid, somehow, although I practically guessed the secret.

The mystery was soon unveiled. On April 22, 1838, early in the morning I received a handwritten note from V. A. Zhukovsky with the following message:

"Dear sir!

"Come tomorrow at eleven to Karl Pavlovich's place and wait for me there, wait for me without fail, no matter how late I should be.

"V. Zhukovsky.

"P.S. Bring him with you also."

I watered that blessed note with my tears, and not trusting it to my pocket, I held it tight in my hand and ran to the hospital. Although the porter had instructions to let me through at any time of the day, that time he

wouldn't let me in, saying: "It's early, sir, the patients are all asleep yet." That cooled me off a little. I unclenched my fist, smoothed out the note, read it practically syllable by syllable, carefully folded it up and placed it in my pocket, and then returned with measured steps to my apartment, thanking the porter in my heart for stopping me.

Long, long ago, when I was yet in the parish school, I would read Kotlyarevsky's[81] celebrated parody on *Aeneid* furtively, so that the teacher shouldn't see me, and

If you haven't got it in your hands,
Don't say that it's already yours.

Those two lines got so deeply imbedded in my memory that even now I often repeat them to myself and apply them to my affairs. I recalled those very lines as I was returning to my apartment. As a matter of fact, did I know for certain that this blessed note referred to his case? I didn't know, I only had a feeling that it was so and feelings often proved deceptive. What if my intuition was playing me false now? What a terrible wrong I would have done, and to my favourite friend at that! I was frightened at the very thought of it.

During that longest of days I approached Karl Pavlovich's door twenty times and yet, overcome by an unaccountable fear, I turned back each time. I don't know what I was afraid of. The twenty-first time I ventured to ring and Lukyan, looking out the window, said: "Master's not at home." It was as though a mountain had rolled off my shoulders, as though I had accomplished some mighty feat and could breathe freely at last.

I walked briskly from the Academy to the Third Line—and there saw Karl Pavlovich coming towards me. I became utterly confused and made as though to run away from him, but he stopped me with the question:

"Did you receive Zhukovsky's note?"

"I did," I replied barely audibly.

"Be at my place at eleven o'clock tomorrow, then. Good-bye! And oh yes ... if he's fit, bring him along with you," he added, moving off.

Well, thought I, there's not the slightest doubt now, yet:

If you haven't got it in your hands,
Don't say that it's already yours.

But several minutes later that wise saying had evaporated from my highly unpractical head. I was seized with an irresistible desire to bring him to Karl Pavlovich's the following day. Would the doctor grant him permission? There was the rub. In order to solve this problem I went to the doctor's quarters, found him at home and told him the cause of my sudden visit. The doctor cited several cases of mental derangement caused by sudden joy or sudden grief. "Especially," he concluded, "since your protégé has not yet fully recovered from the fever." I had no answer to such arguments, so I thanked the doctor for his good advice, said my good-byes and went out. I polished the pavement a long time with my shoes without going anywhere in particular. I had an urge to visit old Venetsianov to see whether he could tell me something more definite, but it was past midnight already and he wasn't one of us single fellows—therefore a post-midnight visit was out of the question. Then the thought struck me to go to Troitsky Bridge and wait there to watch the sunrise. But Troitsky Bridge was quite a distance away and I was already feeling tired. Perhaps I should content myself with quietly sitting beside those giant sphinxes? After all, it's the same Neva. The same, yet not the same. However, after some thought, I turned my steps to the sphinxes. Sitting down on a granite bench and leaning against a bronze gryphon, I long admired the gentle-flowing beauty of the Neva.

At sunrise a porter of the Academy came to the Neva for water and woke me up, repeating in a tone of admonition: "It is fortunate that people aren't about yet, or they would say, what a good-for-nothing."

Compensating the porter with a coin for his service, I went home and there I fell asleep, as they say, like a log.

At eleven on the dot I was at Karl Pavlovich's apartment and Lukyan, opening the door to me, said: "You are asked to wait." In the studio my eyes were

attracted by the famous Zampieri painting, *John the Baptist,* which I had known only by reputation and from Miller's engraving. Again I was bewildered! Did Vassily Andreyevich invite me to see that painting? But why, then, did he write "bring him with you also"? I had the note on me, so I took it out and after reading the postscript over several times I grew somewhat calmer and walked closer to the painting, but the damned doubts prevented me from enjoying that very fine work to the full.

Nonetheless, I did not notice when Karl the Great entered the studio, accompanied by Count Vyelgorsky and V. A. Zhukovsky. With a bow I let them take my place and I went over to the portrait of Zhukovsky. They long admired the great work of the poor martyr Zampieri, while my heart grew faint with expectation. At last Zhukovsky took a neatly folded paper from his pocket and, extending it to me, said:

"Give that to your pupil."

I unfolded the paper. It was his certificate of release from serfdom, witnessed by Count Vyelgorsky, Zhukovsky and Bryullov. I crossed myself piously and three times kissed those celebrated signatures.

I expressed my gratitude to the great humanitarian trio to the best of my ability, and then, saying my good-byes hastily, I went out to the corridor and ran to Venetsianov's.

The old man met me with the joyous question: "What's new?" Without a word I took the treasured deed from my pocket and gave it to him.

"I know, I know everything," he said, returning the paper to me.

"But I don't know anything! For God's sake, tell me how it all came about."

"Thank God it did come about, but let us have lunch first and then I'll tell you about it—it's a long story, and above all, a beautiful story."

And raising his voice, he recited a line from Zhukovsky:

Children, the oatmeal's on the table, say grace!

"Yes, papa," came a feminine voice and Venetsianov's daughters, accompanied by A. N. Mokritsky, entered from the drawing-room, and we sat down at the table. Contrary to custom, lunch was eaten in a noisy and merry atmosphere. The old man became animated and related the story of V. A. Zhukovsky's portrait, without hardly a mention of his own part in that noble enterprise. He just added in conclusion:

"I was only a simple go-between in that magnanimous transaction."

Here is how the deal was actually carried out.

Karl Bryullov painted a portrait of Zhukovsky, and then Zhukovsky and Count Vyelgorsky offered that portrait to the royal family for 2,500 rubles in cash and for that money they bought my pupil's freedom, while old Venetsianov, as he himself described it, played the role of a diligent and noble-spirited go-between in that good deed.

What should I do now? When and how should I announce the joyous news to him? Venetsianov repeated the same advice that the doctor had given me and I was completely convinced that utmost care must be observed. But how could I hold myself back? Perhaps I should stop visiting him for a while? No, because then he would think that I too had fallen ill, or that I had forsaken him, and that would torment him. After thinking it over, I mustered my will and went to the Mary Magdalene hospital. At the first visit I passed the test with honours and at the second and third visits I began to prepare him a little for the news. I asked the doctor how soon he could be permitted to leave the hospital, but he advised me not to hurry. Impatience again began to torment me.

One morning his former guildmaster came to my apartment and without beating about the bush began to reproach me, saying that I had robbed him in a most barbarous fashion, stealing away his best workman, and that because of me he was losing several thousand rubles at the very least. For quite a while I couldn't make out what the matter was and how I came to be a robber. Finally he told me that the previous day the landowner

had called him over to his place and told him all that had happened, asking him to cancel the contract; that same day he had been at the hospital and found that the sick lad knew nothing at all about it.

"There goes my caution!" I thought.

"But what do you want from me now?" I asked him.

"Nothing. I only want to know if all that is the truth."

"The truth," I answered, and we parted.

I was glad of such a turn of events: now he was already prepared, and could receive the news more calmly than before.

"Is it true? Can I believe what I have heard?" he asked as he met me at the door of his ward.

"I don't know what you heard."

"The master told me yesterday that I ..." and he stopped, as though afraid to finish the sentence, then after a period of silence, mumbled almost inaudibly: "... that I have been set free!... that you...." And tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Calm yourself," I told him, "so far it just appears to resemble the truth." But he didn't hear a thing and continued to weep. A few days later he was released from the hospital and moved in with me, completely happy with the arrangement.

There is much, very much, that is beautiful in divine, everlasting nature, but the triumph and crown of deathless beauty is the face of a human being animated by happiness. I know nothing loftier or more beautiful. It fell to my lot but once in my life to fully satiate myself on such fascinating beauty.

During several days he was so happy, so fine, that I couldn't gaze upon him without being moved. He poured some of his boundless happiness over into my heart. His ecstasy was sandwiched in with periods of calm, smiling happiness. Although he tried to work during all those days, the work couldn't get going and he would put away his drawing in the briefcase, take out the certificate of freedom from his pocket, read it over carefully, cross himself, kiss it and give way to tears.

In order to draw his attention away from the object of

his happiness, I took the certificate from him on the pretext that it had to be registered in the Chamber of Civil Affairs, and every day I took him to the galleries at the Academy. When his suit was ready I dressed him as though I were his nurse and we went to the provincial government house. After registering the precious deed, I led him to the Stroganov gallery where I showed him the original Velasquez painting, and our day's adventures ended in this way.

The following day at ten in the morning I dressed him up again and took him to Karl Pavlovich and handed him over to our immortal Bryullov much as a doting father entrusts his son to a teacher.

From that day on he began to attend classes at the Academy and was made a pensioner of the Society for the Encouragement of Artists.

I had long intended to forsake our Northern Palmira[82] for some humble nook in the hospitable provinces. During the current year that desirable nook became available at one of the provincial universities and I didn't fail to seize the opportunity. In times gone by, when I attended sculpture classes and dreamed of the land of wonders and of the world capital crowned by the Buonarroti cupola,[83] if anyone had proposed that I take a position as a teacher of drawing at a university, I would have thrown my pencil down and exclaimed, "After this, is it worth while to study the divine arts!" But now, when imagination has been balanced with common sense, when you look into the future with open eyes and not through rose-coloured glasses, despite yourself the saying keeps coming into your head: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

I should have departed for the position in the winter, but was held up in the capital by certain personal matters, and especially the matter of no-longer-mine but K. Bryullov's pupil, later by his illness and lengthy convalescence, and finally, by financial difficulties. When all these matters came to a satisfactory conclusion, I placed my favourite under the wing of Karl the Great, as I have

already related, and early in May I finally left the capital for a lengthy period.

Parting with my favourite, I left him my flat with the easel and other scanty furnishings, together with all the plaster-of-Paris casts which I couldn't take with me. I advised him to invite a friend to share the quarters with him until the winter, and in the winter Sternberg[84] would move in with him—Sternberg at that time was in Little Russia and I had arranged that we meet at the home of a common acquaintance in Prilutsk district, when I intended to ask the good-hearted Vilya to move in with my protégé into my apartment on his return to the capital, which, I am happy to say, was what took place. I further advised him to visit Karl Pavlovich, but to take care not to pester him with too frequent visits, not to shirk classes, and to read as much as he could. Finally, I asked him to write to me frequently and to write as he would to his own father.

And committing him to the protection of our eternal Mother, I parted from him—alas, forever.

His first letters were all of one kind and resembled a schoolboy's detailed and monotonous diary—they are of interest only to me and no one else. In his later letters he began to display individuality and literacy, sometimes also a special content, as for example, in his ninth letter.

"Today, before ten o'clock in the morning, we rolled up the painting *The Crucifixion of Christ* and had the models carry it to the Lutheran church of Peter and Paul. Karl Pavlovich directed me to accompany it to the very church. A quarter of an hour later he arrived himself, and he ordered that it be again put in the frame and hung in its place in his own presence. Since it had not yet been varnished, from a distance it showed nothing but a dark, dull stain. After lunch Mikhailov and I went and lacquered it. Soon Karl Pavlovich came too. At first he sat in the front pew; after a brief period he seated himself in the very last one. Then we came up to him and also sat down. He sat in silence for a long time, only muttering occasionally, 'The vandal! Not a ray of light on the altar.

What do they want the painting for?'

"'Now,' said he, turning to us and pointing to the arch that divided the church in two, 'if there were a painting done, depicting the crucifixion of Christ, that would be to the size of that arch, now that would be a painting worthy of the God-Man.'

"Oh, if I could pass on to you even one-hundredth, even one-thousandth of what I heard from him then. But you know yourself how he talks. It is impossible to put his words on paper, they would become petrified. Here, on the spot, he created that colossal painting in imagination with all the smallest details, painted it and hung it. And what a painting! Nicholas Poussin's *Cricifixion* is simply a Suzdal handicraft job in comparison, while Marten isn't even in it.

"He let his fancy flow in this manner for quite awhile yet, and I listened to him with reverence. Then he put his hat on and went out, Mikhailov and I following. Passing by the statues of the apostles Peter and Paul, he uttered, 'Dolls in wet rags! Copied from Thorvaldsen too!' Passing Dacciaro's shop, he joined the crowd of idlers to gape at the window hung with coloured French lithographs. My God, I thought as I looked at him, and that is the same genius who a moment ago was soaring so high in the realm of the fine arts, and is now admiring Grévedon's too-sweet beauties. Incomprehensible! And yet, it's true.

"Today I missed class for the first time, because Karl Pavlovich wouldn't let me go—he set Mikhailov and me to play checkers with him, two against one, and lost a three-hour carriage drive to us. We rode to the islands and he remained at home, waiting for us to come back for supper.

"P.S. I don't recall whether I wrote you in my last letter that in the September test I graduated to the nature class at the top of the class for my *Warrior.*

"If it weren't for you, my unforgettable friend, I would not have passed into the nature class for at least another year. I have started attending Professor Buyalsky's lectures on anatomy. He is now dealing with the skeleton. And here it is, again thanks to you, that I know the

skeleton by heart. Everywhere, everywhere it's you, my only, my unforgettable benefactor! Farewell!

"Devoted to you with all my heart, N. N."

I intend to tell the rest of his story through the medium of his own letters, and that will be the more interesting since in his letters he often describes the pursuits and daily home life of Karl Pavlovich, whose favourite pupil and companion he was. In time I will publish all of his letters for the benefit of the future biographer of Karl Bryullov, but now I shall include only those which have a direct bearing on his pursuits and development in the artistic field, and the unfolding of his inner highly moral life.

"Here it is the end of October already, and Sternberg still hasn't arrived. I don't know what to do with the apartment. I don't find it a burden. I pay for it fifty-fifty with Mikhailov. I am at Karl Pavlovich's practically all the time, coming home only to sleep, though sometimes I sleep over at his place, while Mikhailov doesn't even come home to sleep. God knows how and where he lives. I see him only at Karl Pavlovich's and sometimes in class. He's a very original person and has a good heart. Karl Pavlovich proposes that I come to live with him altogether, but I'm ashamed, and I'm afraid to tell you, yet it seems to me that I'm more free in an apartment of my own, and secondly, I very much want to live at least a few months together with Sternberg, mainly because you advised me to, and you never give me bad advice.

"Karl Pavlovich is working very hard on a copy of Domenichino's painting *John the Apostle.* The Academy of Arts ordered that copy. During the work I read. He has a sizable personal library, but it is completely without order. We have tried several times to put it in some sort of reasonable order, but always without success. Nevertheless, there's plenty to read. Karl Pavlovich promised Smirdin to draw a picture for his *One Hundred Literateurs,* and so he has his entire library at his disposal. I have read nearly all of Walter Scott's novels and am now reading

Michaud's *History of the Crusades.* I like it better than the novels, and Karl Pavlovich says the same. I drew a sketch of Peter the Hermit leading a crowd of the first Crusaders through a German town, adhering to Retz's manners and costumes. I showed it to Karl Pavlovich and he strictly forbade me to take any subject whatever outside of the Bible and ancient Greek and Roman history. 'There,' he said, 'all is simplicity and grace, while in medieval history all is ugliness and dissoluteness.' So now I have no book in my flat, except the Bible. I am reading *The Travels of Anacharsis* and Gillies' *The History of Greece* aloud to Karl Pavlovich, and he always listens to both with equal pleasure.

"Oh, if you could only see with what care and how lovingly he is finishing his copy! I simply revere him, and it couldn't be otherwise. Yet what an enchanting, magical influence is exercised by the original! Either it is simply bias, or time has so charmingly softened those colours, or Domenichino.... No, that's a sinful thought, Domenichino could never be greater than our divine Karl Pavlovich. Sometimes I wish they would take away the original without delay.

"At the supper table once the conversation turned to copies and he said that neither in painting nor in sculpture does he admit true copies, i.e., recreations, and in oral poetry he knows but one alone, Zhukovsky's *The Prisoner of Chillon*—and then and there he recited it by heart. How marvellously he recites poetry! Honestly, better than Bryansky or Karatygin. By the way, about Karatygin. A few days ago we happened to walk into the Mikhailovsky theatre. They were putting on *Thirty Years, or A Gambler's Life*—a too salty drama, as Karl Pavlovich expressed it himself. Between the second and the third acts he went backstage and dressed Karatygin up for the role of the beggar. The audience went crazy, themselves not knowing why. That's what costuming means to a good actor!

"Taglioni has already arrived in Petersburg and will soon begin her enchanting flights. Somehow, he doesn't like her, however. How I wish Sternberg will come soon!

I like him without having met him. Karl Pavlovich is too colossal for me, and in spite of his goodness and his kindnesses, I sometimes feel that I'm all alone. Mikhailov is an excellent and noble friend, but he doesn't get carried away by anything, it would seem that he isn't fascinated by the most charming things. But perhaps I don't understand him. Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor!"

"I am in raptures! Sternberg, for whom I waited impatiently for so long, has finally arrived. And so suddenly, such a surprise! I became frightened and couldn't believe my eyes for a while; I thought, I was seeing things. At that time I was composing a sketch of *Ezekiel on a Field, Strewn with Bones.* It was night, going on two o'clock. Suddenly the door opened—I had become so engrossed in 'Ezekiel' that I had forgotten to lock it—the door opened and a human figure in a fur coat and a warm cap appeared. At first I became frightened and I don't know how I uttered: 'Sternberg?' 'Sternberg,' he answered me, and without letting him take his coat off I fell to kissing him and he replied in kind. We long stood looking at one another in silence with pleasure, then he remembered that the coachman was waiting at the gate, so he went out to the coachman and I went to ask the janitor to carry his baggage to the apartment. When all this was done, we breathed freely. And how strange! It seemed to me that I was meeting an old acquaintance, or rather, as though I was seeing you yourself there in front of me. By the time I had asked and he had told me where and when he saw you, and what you had talked about and how you parted, the night had sped by. We noticed the dawn only when we saw that a bright blue shadow was being cast by the candlestick.

"'Now, I think, some tea would not be amiss,' said he.

"'I think that would be fine,' I replied and we went to the *Golden Anchor.*

"After tea I put him to bed and myself rushed to tell Karl Pavlovich my glad tidings, but he was also asleep. With nothing to do, I walked out on the river bank and hadn't gone more than a few steps when I met Mikhailov, who evidently also hadn't slept that night. He was walking

with a gentleman in an overcoat and glasses.

"'Lev Alexandrovich Elkan,' Mikhailov introduced the gentleman with the glasses.

"I told him my name and we shook hands. Then I told Mikhailov about Sternberg's arrival, and the gentleman with glasses became overjoyed as though at the coming of a long-awaited friend.

"'Where is he?' Mikhailov asked.

"'At our apartment,' I replied.

"'Is he sleeping?'

"'He's sleeping.'

"'Well, so let us go to *Kapernaum,* they probably aren't asleep there,' said Mikhailov.

"The gentleman with glasses nodded in agreement and they went arm-in-arm, with me behind them. Passing Karl Pavlovich's apartment, I noticed Lukyan's head in the window and gathered that the maestro had already risen. I said good-bye to Mikhailov and Elkan and went in to him. I met him in the hallway with a fresh palette and clean brushes, exchanged greetings with him and turned back. I was in no condition to read, not only aloud but even to myself. After promenading awhile along the embankment, I went to the apartment. Sternberg was still asleep. I quietly took a chair, sat down facing his bed and admired his childishly innocent face. Then I took a pencil and paper and began to draw your (and consequently, my) sleeping friend. The likeness and expression came out fairly well for a sketch, and I had just outlined his whole figure and set down the folds in the blanket when Sternberg woke up and caught me red-handed. I became confused, and he noticed this and laughed in his hearty manner.

"'Show me what you've done,' he said, sitting up.

"I showed him. He laughed again and praised my sketch to the skies.

"'Some day I will repay you in kind,' he said laughing. Leaping out of bed he washed himself, opened his suitcase and began to dress.

"He pulled out a thick briefcase from underneath the clothes and giving it to me, said:

"'Here is everything I did last summer in Little Russia, apart from a few small paintings in oil and water-colour. Look them over if you have the time, because I have to go out.'

"'So long!' he went on, giving me his hand, 'I don't know what's on at the theatre today, but I've missed the theatre terribly. Let's go together tonight!'

"'With great pleasure!' said I, 'But you'll have to call for me at the nature class.'

"'Fine, I'll call for you,' he said.

"If Lukyan hadn't come for me on behalf of Karl Pavlovich, I would not even have thought of lunch. I was even annoyed that I had to leave Sternberg's briefcase for Lukyan's roast beef. I told Karl Pavlovich my happiness at lunch, and he said he would like to see him. I told him that we had an appointment to go to the theatre together. He voiced the desire to join us if there was something worth while on. Fortunately, that day *The Enchanted House* was being put on at the Alexandrinsky theatre. At the end of the class Karl Pavlovich came into the class-room, took Sternberg and me away with him, seated us in his carriage, and we went off to see Louis XI on stage. That's how the first day ended.

"On the second day in the morning Sternberg took his fat briefcase and we went to visit Karl Pavlovich. The latter was delighted with the monotonous diversity, as he expressed it, of your homeland and with your pensive fellow-countrymen, so beautifully and truthfully depicted by Sternberg. Such a large number of drawings and all so beautifully done. On a tiny scrap of grey wrapping paper a horizontal line is drawn, in the foreground a windmill, a pair of oxen beside a waggon piled high with sacks—all this not drawn but only hinted at, and yet how delightful—you can't tear your eyes away. Or a white little straw-thatched cottage in the shade of a spreading willow-tree, standing on the very bank and fully reflected in the water as in a mirror. Beside the house an old woman, and ducks swimming on the water—that's the whole picture, but what a complete, vital picture!

"Sternberg's briefcase is packed with such pictures, or

rather, such thrilling sketches. Wonderful, incomparable Sternberg! No wonder Karl Pavlovich kissed him.

"Involuntarily I recalled the Chernetsov brothers. They recently returned from a journey on the Volga River and had brought their drawings to show Karl Pavlovich: an enormous pile of Whatman paper, with drawings done with German pedantism in ink. Karl Pavlovich looked at several of the drawings and closed the briefcase, saying (not to the Chernetsov brothers, naturally): 'In this I don't expect to see not only Mother Volga, but even a fair-sized puddle.' But in a single sketch of Sternberg's he could see the whole of Little Russia. He took such a liking to your homeland and to the doleful visages of your fellow-countrymen, that at lunch today he had already built himself a house on the Dnieper near Kiev with all the wood-work most charmingly adorned. He is afraid of one thing, which fear he isn't able to avoid—that's the landowners, or as he calls them, the feudal houndkeepers.

"He is an absolute child with all the charm of a child!

"This day we also rounded off with a show. Schiller's *Robbers* was showing. Operas are almost non-existent, only rarely *Robert* or *Fenella* are put on. The ballet, or rather, Taglioni, has destroyed everything. Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor!"

"For more than a month now I have been living together with the incomparable Sternberg and God grant real brothers to live as well as we do. What a kind, gentle creature he is! A true artist! Everything smiles on him, even as he smiles on everything. A happy, enviable nature! Karl Pavlovich likes him very much. But how could anyone who knows him not like him?

"Here is how we spend our days and nights. At nine in the morning I go to the painting class. (I am already sketching in oils and at the last test I was third.) Sternberg remains at home and from his sketches makes either water-colour drawings or small oil paintings. At eleven o'clock I either go to Karl Pavlovich's or come home and Sternberg and I breakfast on whatever God has sent us. Then I go to class again and stay there until three o'clock.

At three we go to Madame Jurgens to dine, sometimes Karl Pavlovich comes with us too, because at that time nearly every day I find him visiting Sternberg, and he often renounces a luxurious aristocratic dinner in favour of a bowl of plain democratic soup. A truly unusual person! After lunch I go to class. At seven Sternberg comes to fetch me and we either go to the theatre or after a promenade along the river bank we return home and I read something aloud while he works, or I work and he reads. We recently read Walter Scott's *Woodstock.* I was extremely struck by the scene where Charles II of the Stuarts, hiding under a false name in the castle of old Baron Lee, discloses to his daughter, Julia Lee, that he is the king of England, and offers her the high position of concubine at his court. There is real royal gratitude for hospitality! I drew a sketch and showed it to Karl Pavlovich. He praised my choice and the sketch itself, and advised me to study Paul Delaroche.

"Recently Sternberg introduced me to the Schmidt family. He is some sort of distant relative of his, a fine person, and as for his family—they are truly heavenly. We often spend our evenings at their place, and on Sundays have dinner with them. What a wonderful, pleasant family! I always leave them with a feeling of having become purer and better. I don't know how to thank Sternberg for introducing me to them.

"He also introduced me to the household of a Little Russian aristocrat, the one at whose place you and he met last summer in Little Russia. I go there rarely, and that actually for Sternberg's sake: I don't like that patronising tone, or the fawning flattery of his crude guests, whom he stuffs with his luxurious dinners and fills with his Little Russian plum brandy. For a long time I couldn't understand why Sternberg suffers such scenes. Finally the mystery solved itself. One time he returned from Tarnovsky's completely unlike himself, i.e., angry. He long paced the room in silence, then he lay down on his bed, got up and then lay down again, repeating this about three times, and finally he calmed down and fell asleep. In sleep I heard him uttering the name of one of

Tarnovsky's nieces. That's when I realised what the trouble was. The next day my Vilya again departed for Tarnovsky's and returned late in the night in tears. I pretended that I didn't notice it. He fell on the divan and covering his face with his hands, he sobbed like a child. At least an hour passed in this way. Then he rose from the divan, came up to me, put his arms about me and kissed me, smiled bitterly, sat beside me and told me the story of his love. It was a common enough story: he had fallen in love with the elder of Tarnovsky's nieces, and although she reciprocated his feeling, when it came to marriage she preferred a bald doctor, Burtsev. A most ordinary story. After the confession he calmed down somewhat and I put him to bed.

"On the second and third day I practically didn't see him at all: he would leave early and return late, God knows where he spent the days. I tried to talk to him, but he barely answered me. I suggested that we go to visit the Schmidts, but he shook his head negatively. On Sunday morning I proposed that we go to the Botanical Gardens conservatory and he agreed, though reluctantly. The conservatory had a benign influence on him. He grew gay and began to dream about visiting those bewitching lands where all those strange plants grow in profusion the way thistles do here.

"When we left the conservatory, I suggested we have dinner at the German tavern on Krestovsky Island. He readily agreed. After dinner we listened to the Tyrolese, watched people tobogganing and then drove straight to the Schmidts. That day the Schmidts were dining at Fitztum's (the University inspector) and remained there for the evening. We went there and were met with questions and exclamations: Where had we been all this time? Having enjoyed ourselves at Fitztum's, listening to a Beethoven quintet and a Mozart sonata in which the famous Behm was the soloist, we returned to the apartment at one o'clock in the night. Poor Vilya again became pensive. I did not try to cheer him up—how could I cheer him up?

"The next day at Karl Pavlovich's request I went to

Smirdin's bookshop, where along with other books I took two issues of *The Reading Library* where Dickens' novel *Nicholas Nickleby* was printed. I thought to organise literary evenings at the Schmidts' and to invite Sternberg. Everything went according to plan. After evening classes that very day we repaired to the Schmidts with the books under our arms. My idea was enthusiastically acclaimed, and after tea the reading began. I read the first evening, Sternberg the second, then I again, then he—we continued in this way until the novel was finished. That had a beneficent influence on Sternberg. After *Nicholas Nickleby* we read *Kenilworth* in the same manner, then *The Fair Maid of Perth* and several other novels by Walter Scott. We often stayed until past midnight, and before we knew it the Christmas holidays were upon us. Sternberg had practically returned to normal, at least he was working and brooded less. God willing, that too will pass.

"Good-bye, my true father! I do not promise to write you soon because the holidays are upon us and through Sternberg's kindness I have made the acquaintance of a number of people, apart from the Schmidts, the sort of acquaintanceships that should be maintained. I had a new suit of clothes made for myself for the holidays, and an overcoat of English wool, just like Sternberg's, so that the Schmidts shouldn't call us Castor and Pollux for nothing. For the spring we are thinking of ordering camlet greatcoats for ourselves. I have money now. I have begun to paint water-colour portraits, at first for friendship and later for money, only I haven's yet shown them to Karl Pavlovich—I'm afraid to. I follow Sokolov's style more—I don't like Gau, he's too sickly sweetish. I'm also thinking of studying French, that's a necessity. One elderly lady offered me her services as tutor if I would teach her son to paint—mutual favours. But I don't like the proposition, first, because it's far to go (Ertelyev Alley), and, secondly, a two-hour session with a spoiled brat is also no mean assignment. I would rather spend those two hours doing a water-colour portrait, and pay a teacher with money. I'm certain you'll agree with me. Karl Pavlovich has Gibbon in French and I can't look at it with

equanimity. I don't know whether you've seen his sketch, or rather, small painting, *Genseric's Visit to Rome.* Now it is in his studio. Wonderful!—as everything that comes from his brush is wonderful. If you haven't seen it, I'll make a little drawing of it and send it to you. I'll also send *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai.* That was started while you were still here, I believe.

"Oh, yes! I almost forgot—an unusual event is coming up: Karl Pavlovich is getting married, the wedding will take place after the holidays. His fiancée is the daughter of Timm, an esteemed Riga citizen. I haven't seen her, but they say she's a rare beauty. I meet her brother in class occasionally, he's Sauerweid's pupil, an unusually handsome youth. When all is over, I'll describe it all to you in greatest detail, how it took place, and in the meantime—good-bye again, my unforgettable benefactor!"

"Two months have passed since I wrote you last. Such a long silence is unforgivable, but it was as though I were purposely waiting until an interesting episode in the life of Karl Pavlovich came to an end. In my last letter I wrote about the intended marriage and now I will describe to you in detail how it took place and how it broke up.

"On the wedding-day itself Karl Pavlovich dressed as he usually dresses, took his hat, and passing through the studio, stopped before the copy of Domenichino which was already finished. There was nobody in the studio apart from the two of us. Silence reigned for several minutes. Then he turned to me and said: 'It's as though Zampieri were saying to me, "Don't get married or it will be the end of you."'

"I couldn't find anything to say to him, and he took his hat and went to his fiancée. All that day he didn't return to his apartment. There were absolutely no preparations for the wedding, Lukyan didn't even prepare roast beef that day—in a word, there was nothing at all resembling a celebration. In class I learned that he was to be married at eight o'clock in the evening in the St. Anne Lutheran Church on Kirochnaya. After class Sternberg and I took a

cab and went to Kirochnaya. The church was already lit up, and Karl Pavlovich was already there with Sauerweid and the bride's brother. When he saw us, he came up, shook hands and said: 'Married I shall be.' At that very moment the bride entered the church and he went to meet her. I had never seen such a beauty in my life and never will again. During the ceremony Karl Pavlovich stood lost deep in thought. He never once looked at his lovely bride. The ceremony over, we congratulated the happy couple, accompanied them to the carriage, and on our way home we stopped at Kley's, had supper and drank a bottle of Cliquot in honour of the newlyweds. All this took place on January 8, 1839. Karl Pavlovich also finished the wedding with a bottle of Cliquot. There was no feast either that day or the next days.

"A week after this event I met him in the hallway, across from Count Tolstoi's apartment, and he invited me to his quarters and made me stay for dinner. As we were waiting for dinner he was drawing something in his album and asked me to read *Quentin Durward* to him. I had just started to read when he stopped me and called quite loudly: 'Emilia!' In a minute the dazzling beauty, his wife, entered, I bowed to her awkwardly, and he said:

"'Emilia! Where did we stop? Or no, sit down and read it yourself. And you listen how masterfully she reads in Russian.'

"At first she didn't want to read, but later opened the book, read a few phrases with a strong German accent, burst out laughing, threw the book down and ran off. He called her back and with the tenderness of a lover asked her to sit down at the piano and sing the celebrated cavatina from *Norma*. She sat at the instrument without mincing and after a few preludes she sang. Her voice was not very strong, but so sweet and charming that I listened and couldn't believe that I was listening to the singing of a mortal creature of the earth and not some fairy of the air. I can't tell you now for certain whether it was due to the magic of her beauty, or whether she really did sing well, but even yet it seems as though I can hear her entrancing voice. Karl Pavlovich was captivated by her singing too,

because he sat unmoving, with his folded hands on top of his album, and didn't hear Lukyan enter and repeat twice: 'Dinner is served.'

"After dinner Lukyan placed fruit and a bottle of Lachryma Christi on that same table. When the clock struck five I left them at the table and went to class. Karl Pavlovich shook my hand at parting and invited me to come for dinner every day. I was overjoyed at such an invitation.

"After class I met them on the river bank and joined them. They soon went home and asked me to come with them. Over tea, Karl Pavlovich read Pushkin's *Angelo* and related how the late Alexander Sergeyevich had asked him to paint a portrait of his wife and he had refused outright because his wife was squint-eyed. He proposed to paint a portrait of Pushkin himself instead, but Pushkin answered him in kind. Soon after this the poet was killed and left us without a portrait. Kiprensky depicted him as some sort of dandy, not a poet.

"After tea our charming young hostess taught us to play *halb-zwölf* and lost two ten-kopeck pieces to me and a cavatina from *Norma* to her husband, and immediately seated herself at the piano and paid him off. After such a splendid finale I thanked my enchanting hostess and my host and left for home. It was already far after midnight. Sternberg wasn't yet asleep, he was waiting up for me. Without removing my hat I told him my adventures and he called me a lucky devil.

"'Envy me too,' said he. 'I have been invited by the governor-general of Orenburg Territory to spend the summer at his place in Orenburg, and today I went to Vladimir Ivanovich Dal'[85] and we've already arranged for the journey. Next week—good-bye!'

"I was stunned by the news. I couldn't speak a long time and when I came to myself, I asked him: 'When did you manage to get everything arranged so quickly?'

"'Today, at ten o'clock Grigorovich sent for me,' he told me. 'I went. He suggested the trip to me, I agreed, went to Dal—and the deal was done.'

"'What will I do without you? How will I live without

you?' I asked him through tears.

"'In the same way that I will without you—we'll study and work, and we won't notice our loneliness. And oh yes,' he added, 'tomorrow we are dining at Joachim's. He knows you and asked me to bring you. Agreed?'

"I replied that I agreed and we went to sleep.

"Next day we had dinner at Joachim's. He's the son of the noted coachmaker Joachim, a gay, simple and well-educated German. After dinner he showed us his collection of prints and among other things several magnificent lithographs just received from the Dresden Gallery. Since this was Saturday, we spent the evening at his place. During tea the talk somehow turned to love and lovers. Poor Sternberg was sitting on pins and needles. I tried to change the conversation, but Joachim kept harping on it as though on purpose, and then told the following story about himself.

"'When I was in love with my Adelheida and she wasn't in love with me, I made up my mind to commit suicide. I prepared everything, wrote notes to several friends and one to her too (here he pointed to his wife), took a bottle of rum and ordered a brazier to be brought with cold coals, a splinter and a candle. When all was ready I locked the door, poured out a glass of rum, drank it, and I began to see Martin's *Belshezzar's Feast* as though in a dream. I repeated the dose and didn't dream about anything any more. Learning of my untimely and tragic demise, my friends gathered, broke down the door and found me dead drunk. The trouble was that I had forgotten to light the coals, or else I would have died for certain. After this event she became more favourably disposed towards me and finally decided to accept me as her husband.'

"He topped his story off with a good-sized glass of punch.

"I have taken an exceptional liking to Joachim's ways, and am going to make it my duty to visit him as often as possible.

"We spent Sunday at Schmidt's, returned home at eleven and were beginning to undress already when

Sternberg shoved his hand in his pocket to get his handkerchief and instead brought out a poster.

"'I forgot! There's masquerade at the Bolshoi Theatre tonight,' said Sternberg, unfolding the poster 'Let's go!'

"'Yes, let's go, it's too early to sleep,' said I and donning evening dress instead of frock-coats we first went to the fancy dress shop near Politseisky Bridge, hired costumes and demimasks, and then went to the Bolshoi Theatre. The brilliant hall rapidly filled with masked people, the music thundered and wee Capuchins squealed amid the noise of general conversation. It soon became stifling hot and my mask became a terrible nuisance, so I took it off, and Sternberg did likewise. That might have seemed odd to others, but we didn't care!

"We started to go to the upper side halls to get a breath of air away from the crush and the heat. Not one mask followed us, not even for a joke. Only on the stairs we met Elkan, the same gentleman in glasses whom I once met with Mikhailov. He recognised me, and Sternberg too, and guffawing loudly he embraced us. Just then a young midshipman came up, and he introduced him to us, calling him his dear friend, Sasha Obolonsky. It was past two o'clock already when we gained the floor where in one of the side halls there was a laden table. The chewing public woke my appetite. I informed Sternberg of this in a whisper and he announced his agreement out loud. But Elkan and Obolonsky protested and proposed instead that we go to the never-failing Kley and have a proper supper. 'While here,' Elkan added, 'they won't give you a square meal and yet will charge you ten times what it's worth.'

"We expressed our unanimous agreement and left for Kley's.

"I liked the young midshipman for his easy manners. Until now I had met only my humble friends and was seeing a young man-about-town from close up for the first time. He simply rained puns and witticisms, and he knew vaudeville verses without number—a most amiable young man! We sat at Kley's until dawn, and since the bold midshipman had had a drop too much, we brought

him with us to our apartment, parting with Elkan at the tavern.

"That's how I'm living these days! Going around to masquerades, eating in taverns, spending money right and left, and yet how long is it since that unforgettable morning beside the Neva when you first saw me in the Summer Gardens in front of the statue of Saturn? Oh, unforgettable morning! Oh, my unforgettable benefactor! When and how will I be able to recompense you properly? I can repay you only with but a pure tear, and a prayer for you in my heart.

"At nine o'clock I left for class as usual, while Sternberg and our guest remained at home: the guest was still sleeping. At eleven o'clock I went to Karl Pavlovich's and received a gentle reprimand from Emilia Karlovna. We played *halb-zwölf* until two. She wanted me to stay and have dinner with them. I was about to agree already, when Karl Pavlovich remarked that people shouldn't shirk their duties, and blushing to the roots of my hair I went to class. I came again at three, then left them still at the table at five o'clock, and went to class.

"I spent all my days there in the same way as described above, except for Saturday and Sunday. Saturday was devoted to Joachim, and Sunday to the Schmidts and Fitztum. You will note that all my acquaintances are Germans, but what fine Germans! I'm simply in love with those Germans!

"All week Sternberg has been bustling about with arrangements for his journey, but he will surely forget something, that's his nature. On Saturday we went to Joachim, where we met old man Kolman, a noted water-colour artist and Joachim's teacher.

"After dinner Kolman made his pupil show us his sketches of trees, the latter agreeing reluctantly. The sketches were made with black and white pencil on grey paper, and they were done so magnificently, so distinctly, that I couldn't look at them enough. He received a second prize, a silver medal, for one of those sketches, and good old Kolman praised that drawing to the skies as the

triumph of his pupil, and vowed by all that was holy that he himself couldn't draw that beautifully.

"Since Sternberg had no more than two days left to spend with us, Joachim asked him how he intended to dispose of those days. It transpired that Sternberg hadn't even thought about it. So Joachim proposed that tomorrow, i.e., Sunday, we should visit the Stroganov and Yussupov galleries, and on Monday the Hermitage. This plan was adopted and the following day we picked up Joachim and went to the Yussupov Gallery. The prince was informed that some artists were asking permission to inspect his gallery, at which the polite host sent word that today was Sunday and the weather was fine, and therefore he advised us to enjoy the beautiful outdoors rather than fine works of art. Naturally, we could only thank the prince for his obliging advice, and nothing more. In order not to hear similar advice from Stroganov as well, we went to the Hermitage, and for three hours revelled there as only true worshippers of the fine arts can do. We dined at Joachim's and spent the evening at the theatre.

"On Monday morning Sternberg received a note from Dal. Vladimir Ivanovich wrote him to be ready to leave at three o'clock. He left to bid good-bye to all his friends, and I began packing his suitcase. By three o'clock we were already at Dal's, and at four Sternberg and I kissed good-bye at the Central Turnpike and I returned to Petersburg alone and almost in tears. I had intended to stop at Joachim's, but I wanted to be alone; nor did I want to return to the apartment: I was afraid of the emptiness that would weight down on me at home. Dismissing the coachman at the city gates, I walked. The distance I tramped did not tire me out as I had expected, so I long walked up and down the embankment beside the Academy. There was a light in Karl Pavlovich's apartment. Then the light was extinguished and after a minute he came to the embankment with his wife. In order not to meet with them, I went home, undressed and lay down in bed without lighting a fire.

"I am practically never home nowadays, it is so dull and

empty without Sternberg. Mikhailov has moved in with me again, but is never at home, just as previously. He has also become acquainted with the midshipman Obolonsky, probably at Elkan's. The latter often calls at night and if Mikhailov isn't home, he goes to sleep in his bed. I am beginning to like that young man less than I did before: either he really is dull, or else he gets on my nerves because I'm not myself these days. As a matter of fact, although I attend classes punctually, I work sluggishly. Karl Pavlovich has noticed it, I am dismayed by it, but I don't know how to correct myself. Emilia Karlovna is pleasant to me as before, and as before she plays *halb-zwölf* with me. Soon after Sternberg's departure, Karl Pavlovich asked me to prepare pencils and paper. He wants to draw twelve heads of his wife in different poses for a painting he intends to do to the ballad by Zhukovsky, *Twelve Sleeping Maids.* The paper and pencils are lying idle, however.

"It was towards the end of February; as was my custom, I was dining at their place. She appeared especially charming to me on that fateful day. At dinner she treated me to wine and was so amiable that when the clock struck five I would readily have forgotten about class, but she herself reminded me. There was nothing else to do, so I rose from the table and left without saying good-bye, promising to return after class and beat her at *halb-zwölf* for sure.

"When class was over I went to their place as I had promised. Lukyan met me at the door and told me that his master had ordered nobody to be let in. I was greatly astonished at this turn-about and went home. I found Mikhailov and the midshipman there, which was unusual. The evening flew by in gay chatter. At eleven o'clock they went out to supper and I went to sleep.

"Next morning I went to Karl Pavlovich after class, entered the studio, and he met me gaily with the words: 'Congratulate me, I'm a single man!'

"At first I didn't understand him, and he repeated the words. I still didn't believe, so he added, not at all gaily: 'After dinner yesterday my wife went to Madame Sauer-

weid's and did not return.'

"Then he ordered Lukyan to tell Lypyn to bring him his palette and brushes. In a minute all was brought to him and he sat down to work. On the stand there was an unfinished portrait of Count Musin-Pushkin. He went to work on it. But no matter how he strove to appear indifferent, his work gave him away. Finally he threw down the palette and brushes and said, as though to himself: 'Can it be that it bothers me so much? I can't work.'

"And he went to his apartment upstairs.

"At two o'clock I went to my class, still not fully convinced that it had really happened. At three o'clock I left the class and didn't know what to do: go to him, or leave him alone. Lukyan met me in the corridor and ended my perplexity by saying: 'The master asks you to dinner.' I ate alone, however, since Karl Pavlovich wouldn't touch a thing. He didn't even sit down at the table, complaining of a headache, just smoked his cigar. The next day he took to bed and lay ill for two weeks. I never left him during that time. Sometimes he was in delirium, but he never uttered his wife's name. Finally he began to recuperate and one evening he invited his brother Alexander over to ask him to recommend a lawyer for the purpose of undertaking divorce proceedings. He goes about now and has ordered a big canvas at Dovicelli's—he intends to start painting *The Taking of the Mother of God to Heaven* for the Kazan Cathedral, and while waiting for the canvas and for summer, he has begun a full-size portrait of Prince Alexander Nikolayevich Golitsyn for Fyodor Ivanovich Pryanishnikov. The old man will be shown sitting with an Andreyev ribbon and in a grey evening suit.

"I won't repeat to you the rumours about Karl Pavlovich that are going around in the city and in the Academy itself. Those rumours are most absurd and outrageous, it would be a sin to repeat them. The concensus in the Academy is that Sauerweid is the author of that muck, and I have reason to believe that. Let all of it settle down a bit and I will tell you what I suspect, and

until the material is gathered and elaborated, farewell, my unforgettable benefactor!

"P.S. I have received a letter from Sternberg from Moscow. Good old Vilya! He remembers you too and sends his regards and asks you if you should happen to meet Tarnovsky's niece, Madame Burtseva, in Little Russia, to deliver his deepest respects to her. Poor Vilya, he still remembers her."

I omit the letter that followed because it contains nothing except an account of the absurd gossip and the most rotten slander against our Karl Pavlovich, and such things have no place in a story about that noblest of men. His unfortunate marriage ended in an amicable settlement, i.e., a divorce, for which he paid 13,000 rubles in cash. That's all of interest in that letter.

"The drab Petersburg summer passed as though it never had been. Now it's grey, damp autumn outside, and in our Academy there is a brilliant exhibition. Why don't you come to see it? And I would see you with pleasure too. There is nothing particularly notable in pupils' work in the field of painting, apart from Petrovsky's *The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds.* But in sculpture, on the other hand, Ramazanov and Stavasser, especially the latter, have excelled themselves. He made a statue of a young fisherman, and how he did it! It's simply marvellous, especially the facial expression—an animated face that is following the movements of the float with bated breath. I recall that when the statue was yet in clay, Karl Pavlovich unexpectedly walked into Stavasser's studio, and admiring his statue, he advised him to press in the lower lip of the angler. He did this and changed the expression. Stavasser is prepared to swear by the great Bryullov.

"About paintings in general, I will tell you that it would be worth while to come from China, let alone Little Russia, for a look at one of Karl Pavlovich's paintings alone. This miracle-worker, in one sitting, painted it, polished it up, and is now treating the greedy public to

that marvellous work. Great is his fame and vast his genius!

"What can I tell you about myself? I have received a first-class silver medal for a sketch from nature. I've also done a small painting in oils: *An Orphan Boy Shares Alms With a Dog Beside a Fence.* And that's all. During the summer I was continually busy at my classes, and early in the mornings I went with Joachim to the Smolensk cemetery to draw burdocks and trees. I am getting more and more fond of Joachim. We see each other practically every day, he regularly attends evening classes; he has made friends with Karl Pavlovich and they often visit one another. Sometimes we indulge in excursions to the Petrovsky and Krestovsky islands with the aim of drawing a black fir or a white birch. Twice we tramped to Pargolovo, and there I introduced him to the Schmidts. They spend the summer at Pargolovo. Joachim is highly pleased with that acquaintanceship. But who wouldn't be pleased with the Schmidt family?

"I will tell you about an amusing adventure I had recently. Not long ago some sort of civil service clerk moved in with his family into an apartment on my floor. His family consists of a wife, two children, and a niece, a beautiful girl fifteen years of age. I will tell you right away how I learned all those details. You remember your former apartment well: the door from the tiny ante-room opens into the general hallway. Once I opened that door and imagine my amazement—before me stood a lovely girl, confused and blushing to her ears. I did not know what to say to her and after a minute's silence I bowed, while she covered her face with her hands and ran away, darting into a nearby door. I couldn't puzzle out what that could mean and after racking my brain for a long while, I went to class. I worked poorly, my mind being taken up with that mysterious girl all the time. She met me again on the stairs next day, and again she blushed as before, and I was dumbfounded again. After a minute she laughed so like a child, so open-heartedly, that I couldn't help joining her. Somebody's steps were heard on the stairs and that stopped our laughter. She put her

finger to her lips and ran off. I quietly went up the stairs and entered my flat even more puzzled than before. She didn't give me any peace for several days: every so often I would walk out into the corridor hoping to meet my mysterious acquaintance, but if she ever ran out into the corridor she darted back so fast that I had no time to nod, let alone bow to her. A week passed in this way. I was already beginning to forget her. But listen what happened. On Sunday at ten o'clock in the morning Joachim entered my room and guess whom he was leading behind him? My mysterious blushing beauty. 'I caught a thief in your place,' he said, laughing.

"At the sight of the blushing mischievous imp I myself became confused no less than the apprehended thief. Joachim noticed this and letting go of the beauty's hand, smiled slyly. The freed beauty did not disappear, as might have been expected, but remained, and fixing her braid, looked about and said: 'I thought that you sit next to the door and draw, but you're over there, in the other room.'

"'And if he were drawing next to the door, what then?' asked Joachim.

"'Then I would have watched through the keyhole.'

"'Why through the keyhole? I'm sure that my friend is polite enough to permit you to stay in the room while he's working.'

"I nodded my head in corroboration of Joachim's words, and offered her a chair. Without paying any attention to my politeness, she turned to the recently started portrait of Madame Salova that was on the stand. She was just beginning to marvel at the painted beauty when a harsh voice was heard from the corridor: 'Where has she disappeared? Pasha!'

"My guest started and turned pale.

"'My aunt,' she whispered and darted to the door. At the door she halted, put her finger to her lips, stood a minute and then was gone.

"Laughing over this quaint adventure, Joachim and I went to Karl Pavlovich.

"The adventure by itself is nothing, but somehow it bothers me and is constantly on my mind; Joachim chaffs

me once in a while about my pensiveness, and I don't like that. I am even annoyed that he happened to be present at that adventure.

"Today I received a letter from Sternberg. He is preparing to leave on some sort of an expedition to Khiva and writes that I shouldn't expect him for the holidays in Petersburg. I miss him. No one can take his place for me. Mikhailov has gone away to his midshipman at Kronstadt, and I haven't seen him for more than a fortnight now. A fine artist, a noble person, but alas, he leads a most dissipated life! On Fitztum's recommendation I have taken in the student Demski to stay with me during his absence. He is a modest, well-educated young Pole, quite poor too. He spends the entire day in the auditorium, and in the evenings teaches me the French language and reads Gibbon. Twice a week, in the evening, I attend lectures on physics in the hall of the Free Economic Society. Together with Demski I also attend Professor Kutorga's lectures on zoology once a week. As you can see, I'm not wasting my time. There is absolutely no time to get bored, and yet I do mope. There's something lacking, I myself don't know what. Karl Pavlovich doesn't do anything these days and practically does not live at home. I see him very rarely, and that on the street. Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor! I don't promise to write you soon: time passes tediously, monotonously for me, there's nothing to write about, and I wouldn't want you to doze over my monotonous letters just as I am at this moment falling asleep as I write this missive. Once again, good-bye!"

"I have deceived you: I said I would not write soon, and here I'm again writing you a letter barely a month since my last epistle. An event has caused this hurry. Not I, but it has deceived you. Sternberg fell ill during the Khiva expedition, and wise, good Dal advised him to leave the military camp and to go back home, so he suddenly appeared before me on the night of December 16. If I had been alone in the room I would have taken him for an apparition and got frightened, naturally, but Demski was with me, we were translating the most amusing

chapter of Paul de Coq's *Frère Jacques*, and therefore the appearance of Sternberg was accepted by me as an almost natural phenomenon, although my astonishment and joy were not the less for that. After the preliminary hugs and kisses, I introduced Demski to him, and since it was only ten o'clock, we went to the *Berlin* tavern for tea. The night, of course, was spent in questions and answers. At dawn Sternberg was overcome and fell asleep, while I, glad of the morning light, went for his briefcase, which was packed just as full as when he had come from Little Russia last year. But now the scenery and the people were different. Although it was all beautiful and expressive, nevertheless it was absolutely different, except for the melancholy mood, perhaps, though that might have been the reflection of the artist's own pensive spirit. In all of Van Dyke's portraits the dominating traits are intellect and nobility, and that is explained by the fact that Van Dyke himself was a most noble and wise man. That's how I interpret for myself the general expression of Sternberg's beautiful drawings.

"Oh, if you only knew how inexpressibly quickly and happily the days and nights now flash by for me. So happily and so quickly, that I don't manage to learn the miniature homework given me by Mr. Demski, for which he is threatening to give me up altogether. But God forbid, I won't let it come to that. The circle of our acquaintances is neither greater nor smaller, but all of them have blossomed out and become so pleasant that I simply can't sit at home. Although, to tell you the truth, home also has its delights and charm for me. I'm speaking of my neighbour, that same thief whom Joachim caught at the door. What a pretty, innocent creature! Truly a child, and a lovely, unspoiled child at that. She runs in several times a day, skips about and prattles for a bit, and then flits out like a bird. Sometimes she begs me to paint her portrait, but she can't pose for more than five minutes—pure quicksilver. A few days ago I had need of a woman's hand for a lady's portrait, so I asked her to hold her hand up, and she agreed like a good girl; but what do you think—she couldn't hold it steady for a second. A

real child. I tried and tried, and finally had to call in a model for the hand. And what do you think? I had just seated the model and picked up the palette when my neighbour ran in, frisky and laughing as always, but as soon as she saw the model she stood stock still of a sudden, then began to cry and sprang at the model like a tiger-cub. I didn't know what to do. Fortunately, close to hand there was a crimson mantilla, belonging to the lady whose portrait I was painting. I grabbed the mantilla and threw it over her shoulders. She came to her senses then, went up to the mirror and admired herself for a minute, then threw the mantilla to the floor, spat on it and ran out of the room. I let the model go, and the hand remained unfinished.

"For three days after that event my neighbour didn't show her face in my apartment. If she met me in the corridor, she would cover her face with her hands and run in the opposite direction. On the fourth day I had just come home from class and was getting the palette ready when my neighbour entered, so modest and quiet that I simply couldn't recognise her. Without a word she bared her arm to the elbow, sat down on the chair and adopted the pose of the lady whom I was painting. I took up the palette and brushes with a matter-of-fact air and began to work. In an hour the hand was finished. I showered her with thanks for doing me such a kind favour, but she didn't even smile, only stood up, rolled down her sleeve and wordlessly left the room. I will confess to you that this touched me on the raw and set me wondering how to restore the previous harmony. A few more days passed like that, and then harmony appeared to have been re-established. She no longer ran away from me in the corridor, and sometimes even smiled. I was beginning to expect the door to open at any time and my bright-feathered bird to fly in. The door, however, did not open and the bird stayed away. I began to get impatient and think up traps for the crafty little bird. And it was when my absent-mindedness was becoming unbearable to myself and to the good Demski also, Sternberg

came to me from the Kirghiz steppe like an angel from heaven.

"I am so wrapped up in Sternberg now that if I didn't meet her occasionally in the corridor I would probably forget my neighbour altogether. She is just itching to visit me, but here's where the trouble comes in: Sternberg is always at home, and if he leaves, I go with him. During the holidays, however, she couldn't endure it any longer, and since we are never home in the evening, she donned a mask and ran into our rooms in the day-time. I pretended that I didn't recognise her. She hopped about for a long time and in various ways tried to get me to recognise her, but I stubbornly stood my ground. Finally, she couldn't hold back any more, came up to me and said almost out loud: 'You're intolerable, why—it's I!'

"'When you remove the mask,' I replied in a whisper, 'then I will recognise you.'

"She fidgeted a bit and then took off her mask, and I introduced her to Sternberg.

"From that day on everything has gone on as before. She doesn't stand on ceremony with Sternberg any more than with me. We give her candies and in general treat her as good brothers treat their sister.

"'Who is she?' Sternberg once asked me.

"I didn't know how to answer that unexpected question. It had never entered my head to ask her about it.

"'Either she's an orphan, or she's the daughter of a particularly careless mother,' he continued. 'In any case, she's pitiful. Can she read and write, at least?'

"'I don't even know that,' I replied hesitatingly.

"'She should be given something to read, then at least her head wouldn't remain idle. So find out if she can read, and if she can I will present her with a very moral and well-published book. That's Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield.* A fine translation and a fine edition.'

"A minute later he turned to me with a smile and continued: 'You can see that today I am suffering from an attack of morals. For example, here is a question: how may those visits by that innocent scamp end up?'

"A light shiver ran down my back, but I immediately took myself in hand and replied: 'By nothing, I think.'

"'God grant it,' he said and fell into a reverie.

"I have always admired his noble youthfully tranquil countenance, yet now that pleasant face did not appear youthful to me, but fully mature and the face of one who had suffered more than his share. I don't know why, but involuntarily Tarnovskaya came to my mind. He looked at me as though he had foreseen my thoughts, and sighed deeply.

"'Take care of her, my friend,' he said, 'or else yourself be on guard. Do as your feelings dictate, only remember, and never forget, that a woman is a sacred and inviolable thing and at the same time she is so seductive that no power of will can withstand that seduction except the feeling of the loftiest, evangelical love. It alone can protect her from shame and us from life-long reproach. Arm yourself with that beautiful sentiment as a knight with an iron shield, and advance boldly on the foe.'

"He was silent for a moment. Then he said, smiling: 'I've grown terribly old since last year. Let us rather go outside. It seems stuffy in the room.'

"We walked in silence for a long time, then wordlessly returned to our flat and went to bed.

"In the morning I went to class and Sternberg remained at home. At eleven o'clock I returned and what did I see? Yesterday's professor of morals had dressed my neighbour in a Tatar beaver cap with a velvety top and a gold tassel, and in some sort of red silk jacket, also Tatar, and donning a Bashkir pointed cap himself, was strumming the cachucha on the guitar while the neighbour was pounding out a solo *à la* Taglioni.

"Naturally, I just spread my arms in amazement, but they didn't turn a hair, only continued with the cachucha. Having danced until she was ready to drop, she threw off the cap and jacket and ran into the hallway, while the moralist laid down the guitar and began to laugh like mad. I held back a long time, but at last gave way and seconded him so heartily that I drowned out the primo. Having laughed ourselves helpless, we sat in chairs

opposite one another, and after a moment's silence, he spoke first:

"'She's a most fetching creature. I wanted to draw a sketch of her as a Tatar girl, but she had no sooner dressed up than she began to dance the cachucha, and as you saw, I couldn't hold out and grabbed the guitar instead of the pencil and paper, and you know the rest. But here's what you don't know: before the cachucha she told me her story, briefly, of course, as she herself probably doesn't know the details, but still if it hadn't been for that damned cap she wouldn't have stopped in the middle of the story, but then she saw the cap, snatched it, put it on—and everything was forgotten. Maybe she will be more talkative with you. Question her well, it should be a most dramatic story. She says her father died last year in the Obukhov hospital.'

"At that moment the door opened and in came Mikhailov, whom we hadn't seen for so long, with the bold midshipman in his wake. Without beating about the bush, Mikhailov invited us to breakfast at Alexander's. Sternberg and I exchanged glances and, of course, we agreed. I mentioned something about class, but Mikhailov guffawed so unrestrainedly that I took my hat without a word and went to the door.

"'And you want to be an artist! Are the really great artists produced in classes?' the irrepressible Mikhailov pronounced solemnly. We agreed that the tavern was the best school for an artist, and left for Alexander's in complete unanimity.

"Beside Politseisky Bridge we met Elkan promenading with a Moldavian boyar and conversing in the Moldavian tongue. We took him along with us. That Elkan is a strange phenomenon: there isn't language that he can't speak, there isn't a social group where you can't meet him, beginning with our kind and ending with counts and princes. Like the magician in a fairy-tale, he is everywhere and nowhere: at the steamship offices, on the English quay—seeing off a friend who is leaving the country, or at the stage-coach offices, or even at the Central Turnpike—also seeing off some bosom friend, a Musco-

vite, or at a wedding, a christening or a funeral, and all this during one single day, which he tops off by being present at all three theatres at night. A real magician. Some shy away from him, thinking him a spy, but I don't see anything in him resembling such a creature. In essence, he's a never-stopping chatterer and a fine fellow, and in addition, the author of mediocre satire. In fun they also call him the Wandering Jew, and he finds that title quite proper. He speaks with me only in French, for which I am very grateful to him as it gives me good practice.

"At Alexander's, instead of breakfasting, we had a full dinner and then went each his own way. Mikhailov and the midshipman spent the night with us and in the morning departed for Kronstadt. The Yuletide passed quickly for us, and that means—gaily. Karl Pavlovich tells me to prepare for the contest for the second gold medal. I suppose something will have to be done. I have studied so little as yet, but with God's help we'll give it a try. Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor. I have nothing more to tell you."

"Shrovetide, Lent and finally the Easter holidays have passed and here I haven't written you a single word. Don't think, my treasured, unforgettable benefactor, that I'm forgetting you. God save me from such a sin. You're present in my grateful heart as the brightest and dearest being in all my day-dreams and undertakings. The reason for my silence is very simple: there's nothing to write about, only the same old things. It can't be said that I find things dull and monotonous—to the contrary, the days, weeks and months fly past imperceptibly for me. What a beneficent thing labour is, especially if it finds encouragement. And I have plenty of encouragement, thank God: in class I'm never lower than third in standing. Karl Pavlovich is perpetually satisfied with me—what encouragement could be more real and stimulating to an artist? I'm boundlessly happy. They accepted my sketch for the contest without the slightest alteration, and I have already started on the programme. I like the subject, it's along my

lines, and I have wholly devoted myself to it. It's a scene from the *Iliad*—Andromache over the body of Patrocles.[86] Only now do I fully understand how imperative it is to study the ancients, and the life and arts of the ancient Greeks in particular, and the French language has come in useful in this respect. I don't know how to thank the good Demski enough for this favour.

"Karl Pavlovich and I celebrated Easter in a unique manner. During the day he had told me that he intended to go to morning Mass at the Kazan Cathedral in order to see his painting by torchlight, and the Easter procession. He had ordered tea to be served at ten o'clock. To make the time pass imperceptibly, I poured tea for both of us. He lighted a cigar, lay down on a couch and began to read *The Fair Maid of Perth* aloud, while I paced up and down the room: that's all I remember. Then I indistinctly heard something akin to thunder and opened my eyes—it was daylight and the lamp on the table was burning down. Karl Pavlovich was asleep on the couch, the book lay on the floor, while I was sprawled in the easy chair, listening to the cannon salute. Blowing out the lamp, I quietly left the room and went to my quarters. Sternberg was still asleep. I washed, dressed and went outside. The people were already coming out of the Andreyev Church, their Easter cakes having been blessed. The morning truly had a holiday atmosphere. And do you know what I was most preoccupied with at that moment? I'm ashamed to say it, but I must, since it would be wrong for me to keep any thought or feelings from you. At that moment I was just a child. I was preoccupied most with my new raincoat. Isn't that odd? I'm happy about my new acquisition. And yet when you think it over, it isn't so odd at all. Looking at the skirts of my shiny raincoat, I recalled how not long ago, in a shabby, soiled smock, I didn't even dare to dream of such brilliant attire, and now! I throw away a hundred rubles for a coat—simply an Ovidian metamorphosis! Or else, when I used to somehow get hold of a poor half-ruble, I would use it to go to the theatre gallery, no matter what was playing; for half a ruble I used to laugh more heartily and weep more feelingly than many

another person does during his whole lifetime. Was that so long ago? Only yesterday, hardly more—and yet what a marvellous change. Now, for instance, I don't go to the theatre except to sit in the stalls, very rarely in the back seats, and I don't go to see whatever comes, but strive to land at a première performance, or if it's something that has played before, always something special. It is true that I've already lost that unaffected laugh and those sincere tears, but I'm practically not at all sorry for that. Recalling all that, I recall you, my unforgettable benefactor, and that sacred morning when God Himself guided your steps to the Summer Gardens in order to lift me out of the mire and insignificance.

"I spent the feast day with the Uvarov family. Not the counts—God forbid, we don't fly that high as yet! They are a plain, modest merchant family. But they're so good, pleasant and harmonious that God grant all families on earth to be like them. I have been accepted by them as one of their own. Karl Pavlovich also visits them often.

"We spent the holiday merrily. During the week we didn't eat at Madame Jurgens' once, always being invited to dinner, either to Joachim's, or to the Schmidts, or to Fitztum's, and in the evenings we went either to the theatre or to the Schmidts. Our neighbour still visits us as before and is the same mischievous imp—it's too bad that she can't be my model for Andromache, she's too young and slender. I am amazed at the type of woman her aunt is. It seems that she never even thinks of her mischievous niece. Sometimes she larks around in our place for two hours at a stretch, but auntie doesn't care. Strange! Sternberg told me the rest of her story. She doesn't remember her mother, and her father was a poor clerk of some kind and, it would seem, a drunkard, because when they lived in Kolomna he would come home from his office every day tipsy (that's her own expression) and irritable, and if he had the money he would send her to the pot-house for vodka, and if he had no money, he would send her out on the street to beg, and his service uniform was always frayed at the elbows. Her aunt, the present patroness, who was his sister, sometimes visited

them and begged him to give Pasha to her to bring up, but he wouldn't hear of it. She doesn't remember how long they lived like that in Kolomna. But once in the winter he didn't come home to sleep from the office, and she spent the night alone, but wasn't afraid of anything. He didn't come home the following night either, and then on the third night a porter of the Obukhov hospital called for her on his behalf. She went to see him, and on the way the porter told her that policemen had picked him up on the street in the night and taken him to the police station, and then on the following day they brought him from the station to the hospital in a fever, and that the previous night he had come to briefly and told them his name and where he lived, and asked that she be brought to him. Her sick father didn't recognise her and told her to go away. Then she went to her aunt's and has remained there since. And that's the whole sad story.

"A couple of days ago Sternberg gave her *The Vicar of Wakefield*. She snatched the book as a child snatches a pretty toy, and she played with it like a child, looked at the pictures and then put it on the table, and on leaving didn't even mention the book. Sternberg is certain that she's illiterate, and I think the same, considering her sorry childhood. The thought even came to me (if she really is illiterate) to teach her to read at least. Sternberg approved of my idea and undertook to help me. He was so sure that she's illiterate that he went right out to a bookstall and bought an ABC book with illustrations. But our good intentions came to nothing, because the very next day, as we were thinking of starting the first lesson, Aivazovsky[87] came to us from the Crimea and put up at our apartment. Sternberg greeted his friend with enthusiasm, but as for me, for some reason I didn't take to him from the first. In spite of his elegant manners, there is something not attractive, not artistic, but rather politely cold and repellent about him. He didn't show us his briefcase, saying that he left it with his mother at Feodosia and that he hadn't sketched anything along the way because he was in a hurry to catch the first boat for abroad. He lived with us for over a month, however, I don't know because of

what circumstances, and during that period our neighbour didn't visit us once—she was scared of Aivazovsky, and for that alone I would have been prepared to send him abroad every day, but the trouble was that my priceless Sternberg was leaving together with him.

"Several days later we went to Kronstadt to see my Sternberg off. There were ten of us clustered around him, and not a single person with Aivazovsky. That's a strange thing to happen among artists! Mikhailov was also among those who came to see Sternberg off. Didn't he cut a caper! After a gay, friendly dinner at Stewart's, he fell fast asleep. We tried to wake him but couldn't, so taking a couple of bottles of Cliquot with us, we accompanied Sternberg to the steamship. On the deck of the *Hercules* we drank the wine, handed our friend over to Mr. Tyrinov (the ship's captain), said good-bye and in the evening returned to the tavern. Mikhailov was already half awake. We started telling him how we had accompanied Sternberg—he kept quiet—and how we boarded the boat—he kept quiet—and how we drank the two bottles of Cliquot.... 'Scoundrels!' he spoke as soon as the word 'Cliquot' was uttered. 'They wouldn't wake up a man to see a friend off.'

"I'm lonesome without my amiable Sternberg, so lonesome that I'm ready to run away not only from the apartment where everything reminds me of him, but even from my sprightly neighbour. I won't write anything more just now—I'm lonesome and I don't want to pass my loneliness on to you via my dull missive. I had better get going on the programme. Farewell."

"The summer flew by fast, more swiftly than a minute does for an idle dandy. Only after the exhibition, I suddenly noticed that it was gone. And yet during the summer Joachim and I visited old Kolman several times on Krestovsky Island, and under his guidance I drew three sketches: two of fir-trees and one of a birch. What a fine person Kolman is! The Schmidts have already returned to the city, and it was they who reminded me with their reproaches that summer was over. I had not

visited them once—it was far away and my days and nights were taken up with the programme. But how sincerely they congratulated me on my success. Yes, with success, my unforgettable benefactor! What a great thing the programme is for a pupil! It is his touchstone, and how happy he is if on that stone he is shown to be a true artist, not a counterfeit. I have experienced that happiness to the full. I can't describe that wonderful, immeasurably sweet feeling to you. It is the enduring concentration in a person of everything that is sacred and beautiful in the world. On the other hand, what a bitter and tormenting spiritual condition preceded that sacred happiness—during the waiting period. Despite Karl Pavlovich's assurances of my success, I suffered as a criminal must before his death sentence is carried out, no—worse! I didn't know whether I was to die or remain alive, and in my opinion, that's harder still. The sentence had not yet been announced, and while awaiting the terrible verdict, Mikhailov and I dropped in to Deli's to play a game of billiards, but my hands shook and I couldn't pocket a single ball, while he was packing them in as though there was nothing to be excited about. And yet his fate too was in the hands of the judges—his programme stood alongside of mine. Such indifference made me angry, I threw down my cue and went home. In the corridor I met my laughing, happy neighbour.

"'Well?' she asked me.

"'Nothing,' I replied.

"'How's that, nothing? Here I've gone and decorated your room for a merry celebration, and you come here down in the mouth.'

"And she also tried to make a down-in-the-mouth face, but she couldn't. I thanked her for her kindness, and invited her into the room. She began to cheer me up so childishly and sincerely, that I couldn't help laughing.

"'Nothing is known as yet, the examinations aren't over,' I said.

"'Then why did you deceive me, you shameless man! If I had known, I wouldn't have tidied up your room.'

"And she pouted with her rose-bud lips.

"'You may be sure that I didn't tidy up Mikhailov's,' she continued. 'Let him and his midshipman wallow around like bears in their den, what's it to me.'

"I thanked her for her preference and asked her if she would be glad if Mikhailov got a medal and I didn't.

"'I'll break his arms, I'll scratch his eyes out, I'll kill him dead!'

"'And if I do?'

"'Then I myself will die of joy.'

"'Why such preference for me?' I asked her.

"'Why... Because... because... you promised to teach me to read in the winter....'

"'I'll keep my word,' I said.

"'Go to the Academy and find out what's going there,' she said, 'and I'll wait for you in the corridor.'

"'Why not in here?' I asked.

"'What would I do if the midshipman came?'

"She's right, I thought to myself, and without a word went out into the corridor. She locked the door and put the key in her pocket.

"'I don't want them to come into your room in your absence and spoil anything.'

"What makes her think they might spoil something in my room, I mused—it's simply childish caprice.

"'So long,' said I, going downstairs. 'Wish me luck.'

"'With all my heart,' she said solemnly and disappeared.

"I walked out on the street. I was afraid to go to the Academy. The gates of the Academy seemed to me like the open maw of some horrible monster. I walked the streets until I was perspiring, then I crossed myself and ran through those terrible gates. My impatient friends were pacing the corridor of the second floor like shades at Charon's ferry. I joined the crowd. The professors had already emerged from the circular conference room. The fateful moment was at hand. As Andrei Ivanovich (the inspector) came out, I was the first one he met, and walking past me he whispered, 'Congratulations'. I have never heard anything sweeter or more melodious in my life, and I never will. I rushed home pell-mell and in my

ecstasy showered kisses on my neighbour. It is well that no one saw us, because it happened on the stairs. Although I don't see anything reprehensible in it, still—thank God that nobody saw us.

"That is approximately the way in which that examination, which shook me to the roots, concluded. And all that I have written you is now only a dark silhouette of living nature, a pale shadow of the actual event. It cannot be expressed, neither by the pen, nor by the brush, nor even by words.

"Mikhailov failed the test. If, God forbid, such a misfortune had befallen me, I would have gone mad, but he came to the apartment as though nothing had occurred, put on his warm overcoat and departed to visit his midshipman in Kronstadt. I can't understand why he's attached to this midshipman. I can't see anything attractive about him, but he dotes on him. At first, it is true, I liked him too, but not for long. My poor tutor Demski!—now there's a really attractive person. He is ill, poor fellow, incurably ill: consumption in the last stage. He still walks about, but just barely moves. A couple of days ago he came to congratulate me on winning the medal, and we spent the evening in warm, friendly conversation. He kept foretelling my future with such conviction, and in such a natural and lively manner, that I involuntarily believed him. Poor Demski, he doesn't even suspect his illness; he is so sincerely carried away with dreams of his future as only a healthy young man can be. He is happy, if dreams can be termed happiness. He says that the main and most difficult obstacle has already been overcome, i.e., poverty, that he is no longer obliged to sit up nights copying lectures for a ruble or so, that he is now completely independent financially and can devote himself fully to his favourite studies, and that if he doesn't surpass his idol, Lelewel, in the field of his country's history, he will at least equal him, and that his coming thesis opens up all the avenues for him to make his radiant hopes come true. And here the poor fellow is coughing up blood all the while, and striving to hide it from me. My God, what I wouldn't give to have him

realise his ardent wishes! But alas, there is absolutely no hope—he will probably not last to the break-up of the ice on the Neva.

"At the moment of the most heart-to-heart outpourings on Demski's part, the door opened noisily and the dashing midshipman walked in.

"'Is Mishka in his room?' he inquired without taking off his cap.

"'He left for Kronstadt yesterday to visit you,' I replied.

"'That means that we passed each other. Let him have an outing. By the way, I'll spend the night here.'

"And he went into Mikhailov's room. I gave him a candle. What was I to do? I had offered Mikhailov's bed to Demski, being completely assured that nobody would grab it from us. Demski noticed my discomfiture, smiled, took his cap and gave me his hand. I also silently put on my cap and went outside with him, leaving the midshipman to himself. Having accompanied Demski to his flat, I returned home, and what did I find there? Unaware that I wasn't at home, my neighbour had run into my room, and the half-undressed midshipman had grabbed her and was trying to lock the door when I came up and interrupted him. She tore herself from his arms, spat in his face and ran away.

"'Quicksilver and no mistake,' said the midshipman, wiping his face.

"I was outraged by that scene, but I didn't let him notice it, and since it wasn't late as yet, I unceremoniously left him in the flat and went to seek company for the autumn evening somewhere else.

"My visits to friends weren't successful, I was met everywhere by locked doors. It was too late to go to the Schmidts, Karl Pavlovich also wasn't at home, and I didn't know what to do with myself. The damned midshipman riled me, I hated him. I don't know whether it was jealousy or simply disgust with a man who profaned the sacred modesty of a woman. A woman, no matter who she may be, is entitled to respect from us, or at the very least, to polite behaviour, and the midshipman had violated both. Either he was simply drunk, or at bottom he is a

cad. Somehow I believe the latter.

"Then a light appeared in Karl Pavlovich's apartment, so I went there and stayed the night. Karl Pavlovich noticed that I wasn't myself, but was kind enough not to question me, only told me to make a bed up for myself in his room and read aloud to me. The book was Washington Irving's *Christopher Columbus.* While reading, he conjured up on the spot a picture of Spaniards leading the great admiral from the launch to the shore, heavily laden with chains. What a sad, instructive picture. I offered him a sheet of paper and a pencil, but he refused them and continued to read.

"While talking of his travels through ancient Greece at supper one time, he verbally outlined a wonderful picture entitled *Evening in Athens.* The picture showed an Athenian street in the light of the setting sun. On the horizon stood the Parthenon, roughly finished but with the scaffolding not yet removed. In the foreground, in the middle of the street, a team of buffaloes was drawing a marble statue, *The Ylis River* by Phidias. At the side, Phidias himself was being greeted by Pericles, Aspasia and all that was glorious in the Athens of Pericles, from the famous haetera to Xanthippe. And all this in the rays of the setting sun. A magnificent picture! What was the *School of Athens* alongside that thrilling picture! And yet he didn't paint it only because there already is the *School of Athens.* And how many similar pictures end up only as inspired words or as inch-size sketches in his not very magnificent album. Thus, for example, last winter he drew several of the tiniest sketches on one and the same theme. I did not know what was up and could only guess that my great teacher was planning something special. And I wasn't wrong in my surmises.

"This summer I began to notice that before sunrise every day he repaired to his studio in his grey workshirt, and remained there until evening. Lukyan alone knew what was going on there, because he carried him water and lunch. I was working on my programme at the time and I couldn't offer to read aloud to him, although I was convinced that he would have gladly accepted such

services, being a booklover. Three weeks passed in this manner. I was all aquiver with expectation. He had never before stayed in his studio so constantly. It had to be something exceptional. Such a colossal genius never created anything ordinary anyway!

"Once toward evening, having dismissed the model, I started to go outside. In the corridor I was met by an unshaven Karl Pavlovich. He asked to see my programme work. With trepidation I led him to my study, where he made several unimportant observations, and then said: 'Now let's go to see my programme.' So we went to his studio.

"I don't know whether or not to describe for you what I saw there? I am obliged to describe it to you, but how can I describe the indescribable?

"As I opened the studio door, I first saw the back of a huge dark canvas stretched on a frame. On the canvas in black paint was inscribed: 'Begun June 17.' On the other side of the canvas a music box was playing the chorus from *The Huguenots.* With my heart in my throat, I walked to the other side of the canvas, looked around, and ... it took my breath away: what I saw before me was not a painting but the real siege of Pskov in all its horror and majesty. Here was the explanation for those tiny sketches. This is why he made that trip to Pskov last summer. I had known that he contemplated doing the picture, but never imagined that he would get it done so quickly. So quickly and so beautifully! Before I draw a little copy of this new marvel for you, I will describe it, very scantily, naturally.

"On the right side of the viewer, in the background you see the tower being blown up; a bit closer you see the breach in the wall and the hand-to-hand fighting in that breach, and such fighting that it's frightening to look at. You imagine you can hear the cries and the ring of swords against the Livonian, Polish, Lithuanian and God knows what other iron helmets. On the left side of the painting, on the second ground, you see a religious procession with banners and an icon of the Mother of God, with the bishop walking in front solemnly and

serenely, holding the sword of Saint Mikhail, the Prince of Pskov. What striking contrast! In the foreground, in the centre of the painting, you see a pale monk with a cross in his hand, seated on a bay horse. To the right of the monk is Shuisky's horse, dying, while Shuisky himself is running to the breach with his arms raised. To the left of the monk a pious old woman is blessing a youth, or rather a boy, against the foe. Still farther left, a girl is giving weary warriors to drink from a bucket, while in the very corner of the painting a semi-naked dying warrior is being held up by a woman, perhaps his future widow. What marvellous, diverse episodes! I haven't told you half of them yet. My letter would be endless and yet not complete if I began to describe all the details of that perfect work of art for you.

"You must be satisfied for the time being with at least this prosaic description of a work that is of the highest poetic order. Later on I will send you an outline of it, and you will then see more clearly what a divine work it is.

"What else shall I write you about, my unforgettable benefactor? I write you so rarely and so little that I'm ashamed of myself. Your reproof that I don't write because I'm lazy, isn't fully justified. I'm not lazy, but I'm not an expert at writing in an interesting manner about my everyday life, the way some people are. Recently I read Jules Janin's translation of *Clarissa* (especially to perfect my letter-writing), and I liked only the translator's foreword, while the letters themselves were so sweetish and so lengthy, that I couldn't stand them. Where did the man find the patience to write such endless letters? I liked the letters from abroad even less: great pretensions but little sense, only pedantry. I'll confess to you that I have a strong urge to learn to write, but I don't know how to go about it. Teach me. Your letters are so fine that I learn them by heart. But until I master your secret, I will write you as the heart dictates, and let my sincere frankness take the place of art for the time being.

"After spending the night at Karl Pavlovich's, at about nine o'clock I made my very unwilling way home to the apartment. Mikhailov was home already, pouring some

wine in a glass for the barely wakened midshipman, while my giddy neighbour was peering out of my room and laughing boisterously as though nothing had happened. No self-respect and not a trace of modesty. Is it simply natural naïveté, or the result of street upbringing?—The question is insoluble for me, insoluble because I am unaccountably attached to her as I would be to a most pleasant child. And I have put her to work on the ABC book as though she were really a child. In the evenings she repeats syllables and I sketch something or draw pictures of her. She has a lovely head! And the peculiar thing is that ever since she started studying, she has stopped giggling, but it makes me laugh to watch her serious, childish face. During the winter I'm planning to draw a sketch of her by the fire-light in exactly the pose she assumes when she's sitting absorbed in her ABC book with a pointer in her hand. It will be a very pleasant picture—*à la* Greuze. I don't know whether I'll master the colours. In pencil it comes out fine.

"Recently I made the acquaintance of her aunt, and that in a very original manner. I was returning from class as usual at eleven o'clock in the morning, when Pasha met me in the corridor and on her aunt's behalf invited me to their place for coffee. I was dumbfounded and refused. Really, how can you enter a strange home and go straight for the food? She didn't let me say a word, however, but dragged me to their door as though I was a stubborn calf. I was resisting like a calf too, and had almost freed my arm, when the door swung open and auntie herself came to her assistance. Without a word she grabbed me by the other arm and they dragged me into the room, locked the door and then bade me feel at home.

"'I beg you humbly, don't stand on ceremony,' said the lady of the house, panting. 'Please excuse the simplicity. Pasha, why are you gaping? Bring the coffee in quickly!'

"'Right away, auntie,' Pasha answered from the other room and in a minute she came in with the coffee pot and the cups and saucers on a tray, a real Hebe. Aunt also resembled Zeus somewhat.

"'I've been wanting to make your acquaintance for a

long time,' the hospitable hostess began, 'but never had the opportunity. Today, thank God, I have had my way. Now, please forgive us our simplicity. Would you care for a cup of coffee? My milkwoman hasn't been around for a long time for some reason, while the cream from the shop is worthless. But what can we do? Pasha has been pestering me for a long time now to meet you, but you're so unsociable, a real recluse, you don't even go out in the corridor much. Have another cup. You've accomplished a miracle with our Pasha. She's simply unrecognisable: she's at books from morning till night, doesn't get into any mischief at all, it's really wonderful. Imagine our astonishment yesterday when she took out that book with the pictures, the one your friend gave her, opened it and began to read, not as yet very fluently, it is true, but everything could be understood. What is the title of that book?'

"'*The Vicar of Wakefield,*' said Pasha, emerging from behind the partition.

"'Yes, yes, the vicar. How he, poor man, sat in gaol, and how he searched for his depraved daughter—she read the whole book right through. We didn't even want to go to sleep. I asked who taught her to read. She told me that you did. Honestly, you have done us a great favour. Whenever my Kirill Afanasyich isn't at the office, he sits working at his papers at home. When evening comes we sit here in silence, and the evening seems a year long. And now, I didn't even notice how it flew by! Would you care for another cup?'

"I declined and got up to leave. But it was no use. The hostess grabbed me by the arm most unceremoniously and seated me in the chair, chattering the while: 'No, I don't know about you, but we don't do things that way—hello and good-bye. No, we beg you to sit and talk with us and have a bite of whatever God has sent.'

"I declined the bite and the talk, however, on the excuse that I had a stomach-ache and pains in my side, ailments from which I never suffer, thank God. The point was that I had to go to class, since it was almost one o'clock. I was permitted to leave when I gave my word

that I would come back in the evening. True to my promise, I was at my hospitable neighbour's at seven. The samovar was already on the table and she met me with a glass of tea in her hand. After the first glass of tea, she introduced me to her master of the house, as she called him, an elderly bald man in glasses, who sat at a desk in the next room, poring over a pile of papers. He rose from his chair, adjusted his glasses and gave me his hand, saying: 'Please be seated.' I sat down, and he removed the spectacles from his nose, wiped them with his handkerchief, replaced them on his nose, sat down wordlessly on his chair and again became absorbed in his papers. Several minutes passed. I didn't know what to do, my situation was becoming farcical. But mercifully the hostess came to my rescue.

"'Don't disturb him,' she said, peeking in from the other room. 'Come to us, it's more merry with us.'

"I left my industrious host without a word and crossed over to my bustling hostess. Pasha was quietly leafing *The Vicar of Wakefield* and looking at the illustrations.

"'Did you see our master of the house?' said the hostess. 'He is always like that, he has become so used to those papers that he can't live a minute without them.'

"I said something in praise of industry, and asked Pasha to read aloud to us. She read one page from *The Vicar of Wakefield* quite slowly, but correctly and clearly, and was rewarded by her auntie with a glass of tea with sugar and an eulogy which could not be recorded even on three pages, and I, as her mentor, in addition to unending gratitude was offered rum in my tea. Since the rum was still at Vogt's and Pasha would have had to run to fetch it, I declined the rum with tea, to my hospitable hostess' considerable distress.

"By eleven we had had supper and I left, promising to visit them daily.

"I cannot clearly define the impression which acquaintance with this family has made on me, while first impressions, they say, are very important in the matter of acquaintanceships. I am happy with having made that acquaintance only because my friendship with Pasha

hitherto had seemed reprehensible to me, and now it was as though everything had been made right, and our friendship became stronger in consequence.

"I began to drop in on them daily, and after a week was already like an old friend, or rather, like one of the family. They offered to board me for the same price as at Madame Jurgens', so I turned traitor to good Madame Jurgens and I don't regret it: I had become fed up with the carefree single men's company, and I readily accepted my neighbour's offer. In their place I feel so comfortable, calm and peaceful, everything is so homey there, the way I like it, so much in harmony with my peaceable disposition. I call Pasha sister, her aunt I call auntie, but I don't call her uncle anything, since I only see him at the dinner table. I believe he goes to the office on holidays too. I feel so good at their place that I almost never go out, except to visit Karl Pavlovich. I don't remember when I was at Joachim's last, and the same goes for the Schmidts and Fitztum. I can myself see that I'm not acting right, but what can I do: I don't know how to lie to good people. That shows a lack of a worldly upbringing, nothing else. Next Sunday I will visit them all and will spend the evening at the Schmidts, because otherwise we may really cease knowing each other. All that is nothing, it can all be remedied, but here is my trouble: I can't get on with Mikhailov, i.e., not actually with Mikhailov, but with his bosom friend, the midshipman, who spends practically every night at our place. By itself, that would not yet be so bad, but he brings with him God knows what sort of people, and all night long they're at cards and drinking. I wouldn't like to change living quarters, but it looks as though I'll be compelled to, if those orgies don't cease. I wish spring would come soon and that unbearable midshipman would leave for the sea.

"I have begun to paint a study of Pasha by fire-light. A very pretty head, it's only too bad that the damned midshipman keeps disturbing us. I would like to finish it by the holidays and start something else, but I'll hardly be able to. I've already tried to work in my neighbours' place, but it's inconvenient somehow. I like the fire lighting so

much that when I've finished this head, I'm thinking of painting another—also of Pasha—as a vestal virgin. It's just too bad that you can't get white roses for the garland at this time of year, and they're imperative. But all that's in the future.

"Pasha is beginning to read fluently, and has come to love reading. I find this very pleasing, but I have difficulty in selecting things for her to read. They say that it's not good for young girls to read novels, although honestly, I don't see why it's not good. A good novel cultivates the imagination and ennobles the heart, while a dry educational book, sometimes, apart from not teaching anything, may even inspire an aversion to books. To begin with, I have given her *Robinson Crusoe*, and then will offer her the travels of Arago or Dumont d'Urville, and then again a novel of some kind, and then Plutarch. It's too bad that we don't have Vazari in translation, or I would introduce her to the notable figures of our fine arts. Do you think my plan is good? If you have anything to say against it, please tell me in your next letter, and I will be sincerely grateful to you. I am now taken up with her as with someone near and dear to me. Now that she's literate I look on her as an artist does at his unfinished painting and would consider it a great sin to leave her now to select her own reading matter, or rather, to read haphazardly, because she has nothing to select from. It would have been better not to teach her to read at all. I'm boring you with my neighbours, but what can I do? As the saying goes, 'You talk about what's bothering you.'

"And now, to tell the truth, I've nothing else to talk about. I don't go anywhere and don't do anything. I don't know what the fates have in store for me next summer, but I'm waiting it not without trepidation. How can it be otherwise—next summer I must be sure to lay down the real foundation for the career which I—or rather, you—have chosen for me. Karl Pavlovich says that the programme for the first gold medal will be announced right after the holidays. I grow faint at the very thought of that fateful programme. What if I'm successful? I'll go mad. And how about you? Can it be that you won't come

to see the triennial exhibition and to take a look at my endorsed programmatic work and at its humble author, your own creation? I am convinced that you will come. Write me about your coming in your next letter and I will have a plausible excuse to ask Mikhailov to vacate the apartment. It appears that he too has had his belly full of the midshipman already. It's good, at least, that I have a haven at my neighbours' place, or I would have to flee my own quarters. Do me a favour and write that you are coming, and then I'll put an end to those things here right away.

"Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor. In my next letter I will inform you about my pupil's further successes and give you the particulars regarding the forthcoming contest. Farewell.

"P.S. Poor Demski can't leave his room any more. He won't live through the spring."

When I received that letter I wrote him that I would come to visit him probably during the Easter week, without waiting for the exhibition, and that I would come straight to the apartment the way Sternberg did. Actually I wrote that to help him get rid of the importunate midshipman. To tell the truth I was anxious about him, because his youthful character had not yet become fully formed. Who knows, he might even become an exact duplicate of the impudent midshipman. Then good-bye to everything—his brilliant gifts, his art, his good name, everything that's fine in life. All that would be buried in the all-consuming liquor glass, as in the grave. Unfortunately, such instances are anything but rare, especially here in Russia. And what's the cause of it? Can the company of drunkards by itself really kill the germ of all that's good in a young man? Or is there something here that is incomprehensible to us? Folk wisdom, by the way, has provided us with one conclusion: tell me who your companions are, and I will tell you who you are. And Gogol noted not without reasons, probably, that if a Russian is a good craftsman he invariably is a drunkard. Why is that so? It's nothing more, in my opinion, that the

lack of civilisation generally. With us, for example, a village clerk or some other scribbler is the same to the honest, illiterate peasants as Socrates was in Athens, and yet when you look close, he's a grossly immoral, eternally drunk animal, and that precisely for the reason that he's a craftsman in his field, the one and only person who can write among hundreds of simple-minded muzhiks, at whose expense he gets drunk and leads a dissolute life; while they are continually astonished at his accomplishment and can't understand how it is that such a learned man can be such a terrible drunkard. It never even enters the simple people's heads that the reason is that he is the only master of writing or some other speciality among them, that he has no competitors, that his contributors will always remain loyal to him because they have no one else to turn to, and therefore he does his business any old way and spends the easily earned proceeds on drink.

In my opinion that is the sole reason why here a craftsman in any field is at the same time an incorrigible drunkard. Moreover, it has been noted that also among civilised nations persons who stand out of the common throng, those who are gifted with higher spiritual qualities, everywhere and at all times to a greater or lesser degree paid tribute to and often were zealous worshippers of the merry god Bacchus. That must therefore be an indispensable quality in uncommon people.

I knew our brilliant mathematician Ostrogradsky very well (and mathematicians in general are people who don't get carried away), and had occasion to dine with him on several occasions. He never drank anything at the table except water. I once asked him:

"Can it be that you never drink wine?"

"A long time ago in Kharkov I drank two wine-cellars dry, and then I had had enough," he answered me artlessly.

Not many, however, stop at two wine-cellars, but inevitably go on to a third, and often a fourth, and in that fourth wine-cellar they end their sad careers and often their lives as well.

He, i.e., my artist, belonged to the category of

passionate people, the sort that get carried away, who have a hot imagination, which is the worst enemy of an independent, staid life. Although I am far from being an admirer of monotonous, sober propriety and daily unvaried ox-like existence, I cannot at the same time claim that I'm an open enemy of a positive, proper way of living. On the whole, the middle road is the best road in life, although in the arts, the sciences and in the mental pursuits generally, the middle road leads to nothing but a nameless grave.

I would like to see my artist become a great and rare artist while being a common person in his domestic life, but those two great qualities rarely blend under one roof.

I would sincerely wish to foresee and forestall all harmful influences on my favourite's youthful imagination, but I don't know how. I am definitely afraid of the midshipman, but neither will anything good come from his neighbour—that's as clear as day. As yet it could still end up in parting and tears, as the first, flaming love usually ends, but with the assistance of the aunt, to whom he has taken from the beginning, it will end in Hymen's torch, and, God grant that I'm mistaken, in dissolution and poverty.

He does not tell me openly that he's head over heels in love with his pupil, but what young lad openly discloses such a sacred secret? He will leap into fire and water at one word from his adored one, before he expresses his tender feelings to her in words. That's how a youth who is sincerely in love acts. And are there youths who love differently?

In order to turn his attention at least a little bit away from his neighbours, I purposely didn't mention them at all. I advised him to visit Schmidt, Fitztum and Joachim as often as possible, since they are indispensable to his inner education, to visit old Kolman whose good advice he needs in the field of landscape painting, and every day to visit Karl Pavlovich's studio as a shrine and a lamp of the finest art, and during those visits to do a water-colour copy of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* for me. In conclusion I described the whole importance of the forthcoming

programme, to which he should devote himself and give all his days and nights to the very last day of the examinations, i.e., until October (I considered such a length of time and such an occupation sufficient to cool down the ardour of first love at least to some extent), and also wrote that if I don't find it possible to remain in the capital for the entire summer, I would return without fail in the autumn especially for his programme work.

As I expected, that letter had a salutary effect, but only halfway: his programme was successful, but his neighbour—alas! But why lift the curtain of secretive fate ahead of time? Let us read one more letter from him—the last one.

"I don't know whether you did it on purpose or not, I only know that you deceived me cruelly, my unforgettable benefactor. I waited for you as for the guest dearest to my heart, but you—let God be your judge.... Why did you have to promise? How much trouble I had with my lodgers! I managed to get rid of them only with the greatest difficulty. It's true that Mikhailov agreed at once, but the redoubtable midshipman held out right until the spring, i.e., until Easter week, and at parting we almost quarrelled: he insisted on staying on during Easter week and I told him it was impossible because I was expecting you.

"'Oh, what is so important about your relative? He can take rooms at the inn!' he said, twirling his silly moustaches. That made me mad and I was ready to let fly with God knows what insults, but luckily, Mikhailov stopped me. I don't know what it is exactly that the midshipman likes so much about our apartment, maybe it's just that it's free and he does not pay the rent. During the winter Mikhailov would stay away for several nights at a time, coming in for a minute in the day and going off again. But the midshipman would never go out except to eat and get drunk, and would return to lie on the sofa to sleep or smoke his pipe. Not long ago he even brought over his suitcase with his underwear, and after I already told him to vacate the apartment completely, he still came

around several times to sleep—he's absolutely shameless. Another strange thing: up to the very day he left for Nikolayev (he has been transferred to the Black Sea fleet) I would meet him every evening either in the corridor, or on the stairs, or in the gateway. I don't know whom he was visiting of evenings. But never mind, thank God that I'm rid of him.

"It's simply marvellous the strides my pupil has made in her studies during the winter! If they had started to teach her early enough, she could have become a really educated person. And how modest and gentle she has become, simply charming! Not a trace remains of her childish playfulness and naïveté.

"Truth to tell, I'm even sorry that literacy—if literacy alone is responsible—has destroyed that endearing childish impishness that was hers. I am glad that I captured al least a shade of that charming naïveté in my painting. The portrait came out very well. Though it presented some difficulty, the fire lighting nevertheless came out successfully. Prevo offered me a hundred rubles in silver for it, and I readily agreed, only I won't deliver it until after the exhibition. I want to present my attractive pupil to the judgement of the public without fail. I would be supremely happy if you didn't deceive me a second time and came for the exhibition, which will be exceptionally interesting this year: many artists—both ours and from abroad—have promised to send their works, including Horace Vernet, Gudin and Steuben. Come, for the sake of Apollo himself and his nine beautiful sisters.

"My programme is going poorly so far. I don't know what will be later on. Karl Pavlovich is satisfied with the composition, and that's about all I can tell you about it. I will really get working at it next week, so far it has been as though I were avoiding it. I don't know why. Even my pupil is beginning to urge me on. Oh, I wish I could tell you how fond I am of that plain good-hearted family. They treat me like a son. The aunt is always good-natured and gay. Even the morose and taciturn uncle sometimes leaves his papers, sits down with us around the hissing samovar and slyly tells little jokes, which are most

ingenuous, naturally. Sometimes, when there is an extra kopeck jingling in my pocket, of course, I permit myself the luxury of treating them to a box in the third circle of the Alexandrinsky Theatre, and then the general gratification is boundless, especially if it's a vaudeville show. My pupil and model for several days afterwards sings the vaudeville couplets even in her sleep, I think. I love, or rather, I adore everything beautiful in man himself, beginning with his beautiful appearance, and I adore as much if not more the elevated, refined works of man's mind and hand. I am delighted by a society woman, and also by a society man. Everything about them, beginning with their expressions and ending with their movements is in such even, proportionate harmony, that it seems as though the pulse beats in the same way in all of them. Only rarely, if at all, will you find among them fools or sages, phlegmatics or excitable individuals and that appeals to me boundlessly—but not for long. Maybe that's because I was born and reared among other kinds of people, and am far removed from them in my upbringing, and therefore, irrespective of all the alluring fascination of their manner of life, I prefer the family life of plain people, such as my neighbours, for instance. With them I am completely at ease, while with those others it's as though I was always afraid of something. Of late I haven't been feeling comfortable even at the Schmidts, and I don't know why. I visit them practically every Sunday, but don't sit there long the way I used to. Maybe that's because my dear, unforgettable Sternberg isn't here with us.

"By the way, speaking of Sternberg, I received a letter from him recently from Rome. Now there's a proper eccentric for you! Instead of telling me his personal impressions of the Eternal City, he recommends me—whom do you think?—Dupaty and Piranesi. What an odd fish! He writes that at Lepri's he witnessed a big collection of artists, among them Ivanov, who is painting *John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness.* The Russian artists make sport of him on the sly, saying that he has become completely bogged down in the Pontine marshes and still

hasn't found the sort of dead stump with exposed roots which he needs for the background of his painting. But the Germans are in transports over Ivanov. In the Greco Café he also met Gogol, dressed up to kill and telling obsene Little Russian jokes at the dinner table. But the main thing he saw on entering the Eternal City, within the view of the Dome of St. Peter and the immortal giant Colosseum, was the cachucha—graceful and passionate, such as it exists among the people, and not prim and rouged up, the way we see it on stage. 'Imagine for yourself,' he writes, 'that the celebrated Taglioni is a second-hand copy of the original which I saw without charge on a street in Rome.' But why should I copy out excerpts for you. I will send you the original letter. You will read something about yourself in it that won't be without interest to you. Poor fellow, he still mentions Tarnovsky's niece. You see her often. Tell me, is she happy with her Aesculapius? If she is happy, don't say anything to her about our friend, don't disturb her connubial peace with useless recollections. If she isn't, then tell her that our friend Sternberg, the noblest of men on the earth, still loves her just as sincerely and tenderly as he did before. That will sweeten the ache in her heart. No matter how a person suffers or what trials he undergoes, if he hears a single friendly, sincere word, a word of true sympathy from a far, unfailing friend, he forgets the woes that bear him down, even if it's not for long, just for an hour, a minute. He is perfectly happy, and they say that a minute of perfect happiness makes up for endless years of the heaviest ordeals.

"You will smile when you read the above lines, my revered friend, and perhaps you'll begin to wonder whether I'm not undergoing some sort of ordeal myself since I write so colourfully about it. I assure you that I have no griefs, but I do grow sad at times for some reason. I am completely happy, and how could it be otherwise when I have such friends as you and my dear unforgettable Vilya? Few men enjoy such a sweet share of the good things as the fates have doled out to me—and yet if it had not been for you, the blind goddess would

have flown past me. But you halted her in front of this poor, neglected clod. Oh, my God, my God! how fortunate, how boundlessly fortunate I am—it seems to me that I will choke with the fullness of my happiness, choke and die. I simply must have some sort of grief, even though slight, because judge for yourself, whatever I project or wish for is always realised. Everybody loves me, everybody is kind to me, beginning with our great maestro, and it seems to me that his affection alone would be enough to ensure perfect happiness.

"He visits me often in my apartment, sometimes even having dinner with me. Could I have dreamed when I first saw him, in this same apartment, that such happiness was in store for me? Many, very many nobles of the tsar's court are not vouchsafed the great fortune which is extended to me, an unknown pauper. Is there a person on earth who wouldn't envy me at the present moment?

"He came to me in class last week, glanced at my sketch, made some off-the-cuff observations, and called me out into the hallway for a talk. I thought he was going to tell me some big secret, but what do you think it was? He invited me to go with him for dinner to the Uvarovs' summer cottage. I didn't want to skip class, and I begged to be excused, but he called my excuses schoolboyish and irrelevant studiousness, saying that it doesn't mean a thing to skip one class.

"'And above all,' he added, 'along the way I'll read you such a lecture as you will never hear from a professor of aesthetics.'

"What could I say to that? I put away my palette and brushes, dressed up and went. As we were driving, however, there wasn't a word said about aesthetics. At dinner there was general gay conversation, as usual, and after dinner the lecture began. Here's how it took place.

"While we were drinking coffee in the drawing-room, old Uvarov began to talk about how fast time flies and how we don't value those precious hours—especially the young people, the old man added, looking at his sons.

"'Here's a living example for you,' Karl Pavlovich joined in, pointing to me, 'he skipped class today just to

fritter away the time at a summer cottage.'

"I felt as though someone had dashed boiling water at me, while he didn't notice a thing and read me such a lecture on all-consuming and swiftly flying time that only at that moment did I perceive the symbolism of the statue of Saturn devouring his own children. The whole of that lecture was delivered with such affection, such paternal solicitude, that I wept in front of all the guests like a child chided for some mischief.

"After all that, tell me, what do I lack? You! Your presence alone is lacking. Oh! will I live to see that joyous moment when I will embrace you, my dear and sincere friend! Do you know what? If you hadn't written me that you would come to me for the holidays, I would certainly have gone to visit you last winter. But the saints in heaven evidently grew envious of my earthly joys and wouldn't let the happy meeting take place.

"In spite of the completeness of my happiness, however, I feel so sad sometimes that I don't know where to hide from that oppressive melancholy. In those terribly long moments my charming pupil alone has a beneficent influence on me. How I would love at such a time to open up my suffering soul to her, to pour out everything that's in me, to melt in tears in front of her.... But that would offend her maiden modesty, and I would sooner smash my forehead against a stone wall than permit any woman to be offended, and especially her—a lovely innocent child.

"I believe I wrote you last autumn about my intention to paint her as a vestal virgin to match the one of her as a diligent student. But it was hard to procure a lily or a white rose in the winter, and mostly, the insufferable midshipman hindered us. Now all those obstacles have been removed, and I'm thinking in between times, i.e., during the work on my programme, to carry out my heartfelt design, the more so since my programmatic work is not very complex, only three figures in all—Joseph interpreting the dreams of his fellow-prisoners, the wine-bearer and the bread-provider. The subject is old and trite, and therefore it is necessary to do it well, i.e., to

create. There is little mechanical work involved, and more than three months to do it in. You write me about the importance of this programme, which may be my last, and advise me to study it as diligently as possible, or as you put it, to become permeated with it. That's all very fine, and I'm fully convinced about the necessity of it. But, my only friend, and I hesitate to say this to you, the *Vestal Virgin* occupies my attention more and does so constantly, while the programmatic work is in second place, and no matter how I strive to put it first, I simply can't do it, I don't know why. I intend to finish the *Vestal Virgin* first (it was started long ago). I'll finish it and get it off my hands, and then I will get going at the programme with greater facility.

"The programme! I have a premonition that all will not go well with my programmatic work. Where do such fatal premonitions come from? Perhaps I should leave it over until next year? Yet to waste one year of time! How will that loss be compensated? By certain success. But who can guarantee that success? I'm sick, don't you think? I really do feel as though I'm slightly daffy, getting to be like Khemnitzer's *Metaphysician.* For God's sake, come and restore my drooping spirits.

"What a shameless egoist I am! On what grounds do I practically demand such a visit? For what sensible reason should you abandon your pursuits and responsibilities and travel a thousand versts simply to take a look at a semi-idiot?

"Avaunt, unworthy faint-heartedness! It's just childishness, nothing else, and I have already been admitted to the contest for the first prize, the gold medal, thank God. I am already finishing ... no, as an artist I am only beginning what may be a great career. I'm ashamed before you, I'm ashamed of myself. If you don't have an extreme necessity to do so, for God's sake don't come to the capital. Don't come at least until I have finished my programme and my beloved *Vestal Virgin.* And when you do come then, i.e., at the time of the exhibition, my joy and happiness will be without bounds.

"I have another odd and constant desire: I terribly want you to see, even if only in passing, the model for my *Vestal Virgin*, i.e., my pupil. It's a strange, funny desire, isn't it? I want to show her to you as divine nature's best and loveliest creation. And—oh, vanity!—I feel as though I had promoted the moral adornment of this marvellous creature, i.e., by teaching her to read and write in Russian. Am I not boundlessly vain? Joking aside, literacy has cloaked her with a kind of special charm. There's one small fault in her, which I noted recently: it seems to me that she reads with reluctance. Her auntie has long ceased to be delighted with her literate Pasha. After the holidays I gave her *Robinson Crusoe* to read. And what do you think? During the whole month she barely got to the middle of it. Such indifference pained me to such an extent, I may tell you, that I was already beginning to regret that I had taught her to read at all. I didn't tell her that, naturally, I only thought it to myself. But it was as though she had listened in on my thoughts: the very next day she read the book to the very end, and at tea that evening related Defoe's immortal work to her auntie with such unaffected enthusiasm and in such detail that I was ready to rain kisses on my smart pupil for it. In this regard I find that she and I have much in common. Sometimes such wooden indifference comes over me that I am unable to do a thing. But with me such fits don't last long, thank God, while with her.... Another thing I can't understand is that since that irrepressible midshipman left us, she has somehow become more modest, pensive and indifferent to books. Could she really?... But I can't admit that: the midshipman is a brutal, antipathetic creature, even the coarsest woman could hardly be drawn to him. No, that's an absurd thought. She becomes pensive and apathetic simply because she's at that age, as all psychologists assure us.

"I am boring you with my lovely model and pupil. You may begin to think that I'm too interested in her. Actually, it looks like it. I like her exceptionally, but I like her as someone especially near and dear to me, like the most tender of sisters.

"But enough of her. Yet apart from her I don't have anything to write about these days. There's nothing to write about the programme as yet, it is barely started, and I won't write you about it even when it is finished. I want you to read about it in the newspaper, and most of all, I long to have you see it for yourself. I speak with such assurance as though it were already finished and all that remained was for me to take the medal from the president's hand and hear out the flourish of trumpets.

"Come, my unforgettable, true friend! My triumph will not be complete without you, it will be incomplete because I owe my present and future happiness to you and you alone.

"Farewell, my unforgettable benefactor! I don't promise to write soon. Farewell!

"P.S. Poor Demski didn't last even to the break-up on the Neva: he died, and he died like a truly righteous man, quietly, calmly, as though he fell asleep. I often had the opportunity to watch human life flickering out when I was in the Mary Magdalene hospital, but I never saw such a peaceful and listless parting with life as his. A few hours before the end I sat beside his bed and read out loud some sort of booklet with light contents. He listened with closed eyes and only occasionally the corners of his lips lifted in something akin to a smile. I didn't read long—he opened his eyes and turning them towards me, said almost inaudibly:

"'Don't you think it's silly to waste valuable time on such nonsense?' And pausing to catch his breath, he continued: 'You would do better to draw something, even me.'

"I had an album and a pencil with me, as is my custom. I began to draw an outline of his dry, sharp profile. He glanced at me again and said with a sad smile: 'A quiet model am I not?'

"I continued to draw. The door opened quietly and the dirty face of the landlady, wrapped in something soiled, appeared, but seeing me, she retreated and closed the door. Without opening his eyes, Demski smiled and made a sign for me to bend closer to him. I bent down. He was

silent a long while, and at last spoke indistinctly and in a quivering voice:

"'For God's sake, pay her the rent. God willing, I'll settle my debt.'

"I had no money with me, so I immediately hurried to the apartment. I was held up at home by something, I don't recall what—auntie's coffee, or something of that sort, I don't remember now. I came to Demski when the sun was already setting. His cubby-hole of a room was lighted a bright orange by the setting sun so dazzlingly that I was forced to close my eyes for a few moments. When I opened my eyes, I went up to the bed, but under the blanket there now lay only Demski's remains in exactly the same position as I had left him. The folds of his blanket had not been disarranged, his faded smile had not changed and his eyes were shut as though he were asleep. Only upright people die so peacefully, and Demski belonged to the assembly of the righteous. I folded his already half-cold hands on his breast, kissed his cool forehead, and covered him with the blanket. I searched out the landlady, paid her the debt which the departed owed her, asked her to arrange the funeral at my expense, and myself went to the coffin-maker. On the third day I invited a pastor from the St. Stanislaw Church, hired a carter and with the assistance of the janitor we carried and placed the modest coffin on the waggon and started with Demski on the long journey. Only Father Posiada, a little psalm-reader and I followed the coffin. We weren't joined by a single mendicant, although we met quite a few along the way. Those poor idlers smell alms like a starving dog smells food. They didn't foresee us parting with any contributions, and they were not mistaken: I hate those detestable enterprisers who speculate with Christ's name. I invited the priest to come to the departed's room from the cemetery, not in order to hold a wake, but to show him Demski's modest library. The entire library was contained in a hastly constructed box and consisted of over fifty volumes, mostly on history and jurisprudence, in the Greek, Latin, German and French languages. The learned pastor leafed the simple editions

of the works of the Greek and Roman classics with great excitement, while I put aside only the books in the French language. It's odd, but in the Polish language, in addition to Lelewel, there was only one small volume of Mickiewicz in the cheapest Poznan edition, and nothing else. Can it be that he didn't love his native country's literature? That cannot be! When we had sorted out the library, I took the French books and offered the rest to the pastor. The conscientious pastor would not agree to accept such a treasure completely without charge, and proposed to put up a granite tombstone over Demski's grave at his own expense. For my part, I offered to cover half the costs, and we there and then decided on the size of the gravestone and composed the inscription. The inscription was of the simplest: 'Leonard Demski, mort anno 18....' Having finished all this, we parted like old friends, each carrying away his share of the estate.

"It is strange, however. Could it be that the late Demski did not attract anybody and himself didn't get close to anyone except me? I never met anyone at any time in his flat, but whenever we went out in the street we often met acquaintances of his who said hello in a friendly manner and some even stopped to shake his hand. All of them were respectable people, too. But it's also true that so-called respectable people do not visit a poor toiler in his gloomy hovel, isn't it? It is sad! Poor respectable people!

"Farewell again. Do not forget me, my unforgettable benefactor."

From that long and diffuse letter I learned, first of all, that my artist, as befits a true artist, is a man of great nobility and sensitivity. People of common character don't get attached so sincerely and selflessly to such a poor person, who has been abandoned by everyone, as was the late Demski. I don't see anything special in that beautiful, selfless attachment; it is the usual consequence of mutual sympathy to everything that is great and fine in learning and in man. According to our nature and the will of our divine teacher, we should all be like that. But, alas, very

few of us have heeded that sacred behest and retained our divine quality of love and chastity. Very few! That is why a person who loves selflessly—a truly noble person—somehow seems extraordinary to us. We gaze at such a person as at a comet, and then, having looked our fill, in order that our own dirty, selfish being shouldn't stick out, we begin to throw mud at him, the clean one, at first by behind-the-back slander, then openly, and if the muck still doesn't stick, we sentence him to poverty and suffering. If we lock him up in a lunatic asylum, that's not so bad yet, but sometimes we also hang him as the vilest of criminals. It is bitter, but alas, it is the truth!

However, I'm letting my tongue run away with me.

Secondly, I learned from that clumsy letter of my artist protégé that without being aware of it himself, the poor fellow was head over heels in love with his pretty, frivolous pupil. That's in the order of things, it's good, it's even necessary, especially for an artist, otherwise his heart would shrivel up over his academic studies. Love is a vitalising fire in a person's soul, and everything created by man under the influence of that divine sentiment bears the stamp of life and poetry. All that is very well, but here's the rub: those flaming souls, as Libelt calls them, are astonishingly undiscriminating in matters of love. It often happens that to the lot of a pure and rapturous worshipper of beauty there falls a morally ugly idol who deserves only the smoke from the kitchen stove, while he in his simplicity burns the choicest incense before it. Very, very few of those flaming souls found harmony in their home life. Beginning with Socrates and Berchem, right down to our own times, we find always the same revolting incongruity in their daily lives. Sorrowful to record, those flaming souls don't fall in love cavalier-fashion, but worse than any poor foot-soldier—for life. This is what I can't understand and what makes me afraid for my artist.

It may happen that he too, following the example of world giants, will shackle his gentle, susceptible heart to some devil in skirts. And it will still be not so bad if he shakes off the domestic devil with a quip, as Socrates or Poussin did, and goes his own way, for otherwise—good-

bye art and learning, good-bye poetry and everything fine in life, good-bye forever. The vessel is broken and the precious myrrh is spilt and mixed with dirt, and the radiant lamp of peaceful artistic life is extinguished by the poisonous fumes of the domestic serpent. Oh, if those luminaries of the world could only do without family happiness, how fine that would be! How many great works would not be drowned in the domestic slough, but would remain on the earth for the edification and enjoyment of mankind. But alas! a domestic hearth and a family circle are probably just as necessary to a genius as to one of us. Probably that's because to a heart that feels and loves everything highly beautiful in nature and in art, after concentrated delight in that fascinating harmony a spiritual rest is imperative, and sweet solace to the weary heart can be found only in the circle of children and a good, loving wife. Blessed, a thousand times blessed is the man and the artist whose unjustly termed prosaic life is irradiated by the beautiful goddess of harmony. His bliss is limitless as God's world.

Here is what I have noticed in my observation of family bliss. My comment refers to people in general, but especially to the inspired worshippers of all that is good and beautiful in nature. They, poor fellows, sometimes are severely punished by the idol they adore—beauty. And you can't blame them, for they react overwhelmingly to beauty in general, and feminine beauty in particular. It cannot be otherwise, yet that is the muddy well-spring which poisons all that is beautiful and good in life.

"How's that?" furious youths will cry. "A beautiful woman is created by God solely to bring joy into our lives which are filled with tears and troubles!" True, that's the divine purpose, but she, or rather we, have managed to change that lofty divine purpose and have transformed her into a soulless, lifeless idol. One feeling has swallowed up all other beautiful sentiments within her, and that's egoism, born of the consciousness of her own shattering beauty. We let her understand when she was yet a child that she's a future heart-breaker and passion-inspirer. We only hinted it, it's true, but she grasped the point so

quickly and understood it so deeply that from that fateful day on she became an innocent flirt and a worshipper at the shrine of her own beauty to the day of her death. The mirror became her inseparable partner in her pitiful, solitary life. She cannot be changed by any re-education. That's how deeply the seed we accidentally threw of selfishness and incurable coquetry penetrated into her soul.

Such is the result of my observation of beauties in general and privileged beauties in particular. A privileged beauty can be nothing but a beauty—neither a meek and loving wife, nor a good, gentle mother, not even a passionate mistress. She's a wooden beauty and that's all. And it would be foolish on our part to demand anything else of wood.

That's why my advice is to admire those beautiful statues from afar, but never to get close to them, let alone marry them, and this goes especially for artists and people who have dedicated themselves to science or the arts. If an artist needs a beauty for his favourite art, that's what models are for, dancing girls and other women in those professions, but in the home, like common mortals, he needs a good, loving woman, not a privileged beauty. The privileged beauty will brighten the peaceful abode of the favourite of the gods with her bright, dazzling rays of joy only for one moment, and then there won't be a trace left of that momentary joy, no more than from the flash of a meteor. A beauty, like a true actress, needs crowds of worshippers, sincere or false, it makes no more difference to her than it did to the idols of antiquity—so long as there are worshippers, and without them, like an idol of old, she is a beautiful marble statue and nothing more.

"Not every word fits the sentence," our saying goes, and so there are also exceptions among beauties: nature is endlessly diverse. I have great faith in exceptions, but only as very rare phenomena; I am guarded in my faith because I have lived more than half a century among respectable people and haven't yet had occasion to see one such marvellous exception. And it can't be said that I am a misanthrope or one of those who impudently defame

everything that's beautiful. On the contrary, I am the most sincere admirer of beauty, both in nature itself and in the divine arts.

Here is what happened to me recently. By chance I was compelled to vegetate quite a long time far, very far from polished or civilised society, in a practically uninhabited out-of-the-way place, and it transpired, not at all, by chance, that a society beauty—at least that's what she later called herself—lit for a while on this out-of-the-way spot. Well, I made her acquaintance, and I should mention that I make acquaintances quite easily. I got acquainted with her and began to observe my new acquaintance, who was a beauty, and—oh, wonder of wonders!—I could not notice in her a trace of likeness to the beauties I had seen hitherto. I began to wonder whether I hadn't lost touch with society in the wilderness. No, she was a beautiful woman in all respects, also clever, modest, even well-read, and, what was outstanding, without a shred of coquetry. I became ashamed of myself for keeping her under observation, and I put aside all doubts and became—not a worshipper, that is out of my line—but a good and sincere friend to her. I don't know why, but she liked me too, so we became almost fast friends. I couldn't be more delighted with my discovery, so much so, that something more than common attachment began to stir in this old heart, and I was near to playing the role of the old fool in vaudeville.

I was saved by an accident, a simple accident. Early one morning—they accepted me into their home as one of the family and they often invited me to take morning tea with them—I noticed that the hair in the back of her head was braided to make small curls. That discovery set me aback. I had previously assumed that the hair in the back of her head was naturally curly, but here is how it was done. That very same discovery prevented me from confessing love to her. I once again became simply a good friend. We discussed literature, music and the other arts almost daily—it isn't seemly to gossip with an educated woman. It was only in the second year, however, that I noticed that she was very superficial and spoke of the beautiful in

the arts or in nature without feeling. That shook my faith somewhat. Further, there wasn't a book in the German or Russian languages which she wasn't supposed to have read, but she didn't remember a single one of them. I asked her why that was. She alluded to some sort of woman's ailment which had left her memory impaired when she was yet a girl. Simple-mindedly I believed her. But then I noticed that she was able to recite by heart banal verses which she had heard in her youth. After that I was ashamed to discuss literature with her, and soon after noticed that they didn't have a single book in their home, except the calendar book for the current year. In the winter she played cards in the evenings if there was company, and she said that was demanded by politeness, but she got terribly out of sorts if she could not get a card party together, immediately pleading a bad headache. If her husband got a game going, however, she sat at the table as though nothing was amiss and looked into the players' hands as though she were looking at her own cards, and this pleasant diversion lasted until long after midnight for her. As soon as this soulless scene began, I immediately went outside. It is disgusting to see a young and beautiful woman at such a senseless occupation. I became completely disillusioned then and from then on I saw her as a polyp, or rather, a real privileged beauty.

If her retirement had continued for another year or two in that obscure corner without sanguinary worshippers, i.e., without lions and wild asses, I am convinced that she would have gone dotty, become a real idiot. She had already reached the condition of semi-idiocy, and here I, simpleton that I was, had imagined that at last I had discovered El Dorado—and all the time this El Dorado was just a wooden doll, at whom I couldn't look later without a feeling of disgust.

Delivering this stern maxim on beauties, I may cause some people to think that in this regard I'm acting like another Buonarroti—nothing of the sort. I'm just as big a worshipper as any leopard, perhaps even more untamed than others. The point is that I like to speak my mind frankly, irrespective of rank and title. The more so since I

am doing it at the present moment for the sake of my young artist friend, and not to publish my views on beautiful women. God save me from such stupidity. If I did that, my own sister would be ready to hang me on the first aspen-tree as a Judas. But then she's not a beauty, so I have nothing to fear from her.

Where is the root of this evil? It is in the upbringing. If doting parents are blessed with a beautiful daughter, they begin to spoil her, setting her above the other children, and as for the education of their favourite, here is what they think and even say: "Why tire the child in vain with silly books. She will make a brilliant career for herself without books and even without a dowry." Since she's a beauty, she really does make a brilliant career for herself. Her parents' prognosis comes true, what more do you want? But that's the beginning of the evil. And its continuation (mind, I'm not asserting this, only suggesting it) lies in this direction.

Our amiable Slavic race, although it belongs to the Caucasian family, in appearance is not far removed from the Finnish and Mongolian races. Consequently, a beautiful woman is a rare phenomenon with us. So we begin to fill this rare phenomenon, from the time it's hardly out of diapers, with preposterous praises, selfishness and other nonsense, and at last we transform it into a wooden doll on hinges, similar to those that artists use for drapery.

In countries that are blest with an abundance of beautiful women, they are compelled to be commonplace women at home, and the common women, in my opinion, are the best.

Why have I delivered this lengthy discourse about breakers of hearts, including my own? Evidently for my friend's benefit. But I think this lecture will prove completely superfluous so far as he's concerned. And his vestal virgin too, from what I have been able to gather from his description, will hardly be capable of penetrating very deeply into the heart of an artist who profoundly feels and understands everything that is lofty and beautiful in nature the way my friend does. She's probably a cheat with roving eyes and a snub nose,

something along the lines of a seamstress or a pert housemaid, and those kind are not a rarity. Moreover, they're absolutely harmless.

Such types as her smooth auntie, however, though they too are not rare, are very dangerous. Her aunt, although he describes her so sweetly, reminds me of Gogol's matchmaker, who answers, when asked by a bride-seeker whether she'll fix up a marriage for him: "Oh, I'll get you married, dear fellow! And that so slickly that you won't even feel it." My friend has nothing in common with Gogol's hero, naturally, and in this regard I have practically no fears on his account. Although the passion of first love burns with greater intensity, on the other hand it cools off more rapidly. But when I think it over again, I can't be without apprehension either, for such strange and heedless matches are often made not only by smart people but even by careful people, and I don't suspect my friend of being very careful, artists don't have that virtue. In any case, I've written him a letter, without exhortation, of course. (The Lord preserve me from those lecturing letters.) I wrote him in a sincere and friendly manner what I was afraid of and what he should beware of, indicated the amiable aunt to him without beating about the bush as the main and most dangerous pitfall. He hasn't replied to my letter, however, so it probably wasn't to his liking. That's a bad sign. But then, he was busy all summer with his programme, so it could be that he forgot about my letter.

Summer passed, September passed, so did October, and yet no word from my friend. I read a review of the exhibition in *Pchela*, written in a dashing style, probably by Kukolnik. My friend's *Vestal Virgin* is praised to the skies, but there's not a word about his programme. What can that mean? Can it be that he failed? I wrote him again, begging him to explain his stubborn silence, without mentioning his programme or work at all, knowing from experience how unpleasant it is to answer the friendly query, "How goes the work?", when the work is going badly. After two months I received a reply to my letter, a laconic and extremely confused one. It seemed that he

was ashamed or afraid to tell me frankly what was tormenting him, yet something was tormenting him savagely. Among other things he alluded in his letter to some sort of failure (probably of his programme work) which almost sent him to the grave, and wrote that if he's alive today it is solely due to his good neighbours, whose sympathy and assistance saved his life, and that he's doing practically nothing now, suffering mentally and physically, and doesn't know how it will all end.

I considered all this to be an exaggeration, of course. That's usual in young impressionable natures: they always make mountains out of molehills. I wanted to learn something definite about his circumstances; I felt uneasy for some reason. But how and from whom? I knew I couldn't get any sense out of him. So I wrote to Mikhailov, asking him to write me everything he knows about my friend. Obliging Mikhailov did not make me wait long for his eccentric and frank missive. Here is what Mikhailov wrote me:

"Your friend, brother, is a fool, and what a fool yet. There was never such a rare fool since the world began. You see, his programme didn't come out, so what does he do in his despair, you'll never guess: he gets married, honest to God, he gets married. And do you know whom he married? His vestal virgin, and she pregnant to boot! Now there's a laugh: a pregnant virgin. And it was her pregnancy, as he himself declares, that compelled him to marry her. But don't think that he himself was the cause of that sin. Not at all, it was the midshipman, the rogue, who played that dirty trick on her—she confessed it herself. Great lad, that midshipman! He made a mess and off he went to Nikolayev as though nothing was amiss. And your magnanimous fool—plop, like a chicken into the soup. Whom can she turn to now, he says, who will take her in, poor girl, when her own aunt is driving her out of the house? So he took her in. Now tell me yourself, did you ever see such a fool in all the world? Never even heard of such a one, probably. Truth to tell, it is immeasurable magnanimity, or rather, immeasurable

stupidity. That would be nothing yet, but here's what is boundlessly funny: he painted her as his *Vestal Virgin*—when she was pregnant, he painted her as a virgin! Isn't that a seream! I haven't seen anything so naïvely and innocently delightful either in a picture or in nature. People crowded about it at the exhibition. It made as great a splash among the public as Tiranov's *Girl With a Tambourine* did, you well remember it. A delightful work! Karl Pavlovich himself stopped before it many times, and that means something. Some wealthy nobleman bought it and paid well for it. In all the shops and at all corners you see copies and lithographs of it—in a word, it has been a complete triumph. And he, the fool, gets married. I went to visit him several days ago and found an unpleasant change in him. It seems that the aunt has taken him in hand. He never visits Karl Pavlovich any more—ashamed to, probably. He has begun to paint a Madonna and Child of his wife and not his babe, and if he finishes it as well as he began it, it will surpass the *Vestal Virgin.* The babe and mother are expressed marvellously in it. I am surprised that he could fail in his programme. I don't know whether they'll permit him to enter the contest next year because he is now a married man; I don't think they will. Well, this is all I can tell you about your muddle-headed friend. Farewell! Our Karl Pavlovich is not quite well; he's thinking of starting work in the Isaakievsky Cathedral in the spring.

"Yours,
Mikhailov."

I was overcome with inexpressible sadness when I read this simple, friendly letter. I saw the brilliant future of my favourite and friend coming to an end, and that at the very dawn of radiant fame, but it was too late to do anything that would help. As a man he had acted injudiciously but nobly to the highest degree. If he were a plain artisan-painter, the event wouldn't have any influence on his work, but on him as a truly ardent artist it could have a most disastrous effect. To lose all hope that you'll be sent abroad at government expense—that alone

is enough to destroy the strongest vital energy there is. He can't even think now of going abroad at his own expense. Even if by strenuous exertions he did acquire the means, his wife and children would take those poor earnings from him before he could even think of Rome and its immortal marvels.

Oh, Italy's the happy scene,
To which the youthful inspiration
Flies in ecstatic expectation
To see the Eden of your dreams!...

But that fortunate, charming country is now closed to my friend forever. Only a miracle could now open the gates to him to that paradise on earth. But such miracles are extremely rare. We no longer have those true patrons of the arts, who used to give an artist money with which to go abroad and study. Nowadays, if some wealthy man does risk something on such a luxury, he does it out of childish vanity alone, so he takes the artist together with him abroad, pays him an allowance as to a hired lackey and treats him like a lackey, making him paint the hotel where he stays or the sea-shore where his wife takes sea baths, and other similarly inartistic subjects, while the ninnies beat the drums: "Now there is a true lover and connoisseur of the fine arts, he took an artist abroad with him!" Poor artist! What must take place in your gentle heart when you hear these senseless, stupid outcries? I don't envy you, poor worshipper at the shrine of the beautiful in both nature and the arts. As the saying goes, you were in Rome and never saw the Pope, and the reputation that you have been abroad must seem the cruellest of hoaxes to you. No, it's better to tramp abroad with a knapsack on your back than to ride with a grand gentleman in his carriage, or else to give up altogether the hope

To see the Eden of your dreams,

and find a corner for yourself somewhere in your own prosaic homeland and there worship the divine idol Apollo on the sly.

My friend has disposed of his future foolishly, with amazing stupidity. For two weeks now I have been reading and re-reading Mikhailov's frank letter daily, and I still can't convince myself of the truth of that unforgivable stupidity. I doubt it to such a degree that at times I'm seized with the idea to go to Petersburg myself and see that repulsive truth with my own eyes. If this was vacation time, I wouldn't hesitate a moment, but unfortunately the school term is on, and consequently, even if I could get away it could only be for twenty-eight days, and what could I do for him in half those days? Nothing at all—all that would be accomplished would be that I would see that which I don't wish to see even in a nightmare. After pondering on it, and getting over the first shock, I decided to wait and see what old Saturn says, in the meantime carrying on a constant correspondence with Mikhailov. I had lost all hope of letters from my pupil, but my hopes for letters from Mikhailov were absolutely unfounded too. Counting on Mikhailov, I didn't take into consideration that by nature that man was not capable of constancy in correspondence, and that if I did receive a reply from him to my letter, and that so much sooner than I expected, I should have considered it the eighth wonder and shouldn't bank on constant correspondence because of this one letter. The truth is, I made a mistake, but who doesn't make errors? I wrote him several hasty letters one after another, but didn't receive a single reply. Finally, I lost my temper and wrote him a rude and very brief letter. This evoked a reaction from Mikhailov and he wrote me the following in reply:

"I'm surprised that you find the patience, time and even paper to write me your tiresome, not to say silly, letters. And whom do you write about? About a fool. Is he worth thinking about and writing such tiresome letters about as you are doing? Forget him—he's a finished man, that's all. But in order to make you happy, here's what I'll add: together with his wife and mama, as he now calls her, he has begun to lush, i.e., he has taken to drink. At first he endlessly copied his *Vestal Virgin* until they finally refused to accept his copies even in the second-hand

shops; then he took to colouring lithographs for shops, and now I don't know what he is doing. Painting portraits at a ruble per snout probably. Nobody ever sees him, he has buried himself somewhere on the Twentieth Line. To do you a favour I went to ferret him out last week. With great difficulty I finally found his living quarters right next to the Smolensk cemetery. I didn't find him at home, his wife said he had gone to some clerk's place for a sitting. I admired his unfinished *Madonna* for a while, and do you know, somehow I grew sad: he is a lost man, and what for, when you come to think of it? He didn't return, so I left without saying good-bye to the woman of the house—I was disgusted with her.

"Despite his illness, Karl Pavlovich has begun to work in the Isaakievsky Cathedral. Doctors advise him to lay over the work until next year and go abroad for the summer, but he doesn't want to leave the work once he has started it. Why don't you come even for a short visit, at least to take a look at the marvels created by our miracle-worker Karl Pavlovich? You could admire your fool at the same time. You're married too, I expect, only you don't confess it, eh? Don't write me, as I won't answer. Farewell!

"Yours,

Mikhailov."

My God! Can it be that his unfortunate marriage was the sole cause of the sudden and rapid ruination of a brilliant youth? There was no other cause. What a dismal marriage!

I could hardly wait for the vacation to come. Finally, the examinations were finished, I took my leave and hastened to Petersburg. Karl Pavlovich had already left Petersburg when I arrived. He abandoned his work on doctor's orders and went to Madeira island. I ran down Mikhailov with great difficulty. That eccentric never has a constant dwelling-place, but lives like the birds. I met him walking in the street arm-in-arm with the daredevil midshipman, now a lieutenant. I don't know how he got back to Petersburg. I couldn't look at that man. Saying hello to Mikhailov, I took him aside and asked him to give me my friend's address. At first Mikhailov guffawed, and

then, barely holding back his laughter, he turned to the midshipman and said:

"Do you know whose address he wants? That of his favourite, N. N."

And Mikhailov haw-hawed again. The midshipman joined him, but his laughter was strained. Mikhailov made me angry with his silly laughter. Finally, he sobered up and told me:

"Your friend now lives in the warmest quarters on the Seventh Verst. They didn't allow him to enter the contest, d'ye see, so he went off his rocker there and then, and they whisked him away to the warm place. I don't know whether he's still alive."

Without saying good-bye to Mikhailov, I took a cab and went to the Hospital of All Who Sorrow. They wouldn't let me see the patient because he was having a violent fit. I saw him the following day and if the keeper hadn't pointed him out to me as the artist N. N., I would never have recognised him—insanity altered him so dreadfully. Naturally, he didn't recognise me either; taking me for a Roman from Pinelli's painting, he laughed and walked away from the door with bars on it.

My God, what a depressing sight is a man who is deformed by insanity! I couldn't look at that dismal scene for more than a few minutes, so I said good-bye to the keeper and returned to the city. But my unfortunate friend did not give me peace, neither in the Academy, nor at the Hermitage, nor at the theatre—in a word, nowhere. Everywhere I was haunted by his terrible image, and only daily visits to the Hospital of All Who Sorrow little by little erased that first terrible impression.

His violence abated with every day, but his physical strength also ebbed rapidly. Finally, he couldn't rise from his bed any more and I could freely come into his room. It seemed at times as though he were coming to his senses, but he still did not recognise me. One time I came early in the morning: the hours of morning were easier for him. I found him completely serene, but so weak that he couldn't move a hand. He looked at me intently as though trying to recall something. After a long, thought-

ful, intelligent look, he spoke my name in a barely audible voice and tears ran in rills from his now lucid eyes. Quiet weeping gave way to stormy sobbing, such heart-rending sobs as I had never seen before, and God grant that I will never again see a man weeping so terribly.

I wanted to leave him, but he let me know by a sign that he wanted me to remain. He extended his hand and I took it, and sat down beside him. Little by little his sobs subsided and only great tears rolled down from under his lowered eyelids. A few more minutes passed and he calmed down completely and dozed off. I gently freed my hand and left the room, fully convinced that now he would recover. The next day I again came to the hospital early in the morning and asked his keeper, whom I met as I entered: "How is my patient?" The keeper replied: "Your patient, your honour, is already in the mortuary; after he fell asleep yesterday morning, he never woke up again."

After the funeral I stayed a few days longer in Petersburg, I don't know why. On one of those days I met Mikhailov. After he told me how he had seen the midshipman off to Nikolayev the previous day and how they had got pickled at the Middle Turnpike, the talk turned to the subject of the late departed, his widow, and finally, his unfinished *Madonna.* I asked Mikhailov to guide me to the widow's flat, to which he readily agreed, because he himself wanted to take another look at the unfinished *Madonna.* In the dead man's rooms we didn't find anything to show that an artist had once lived here, except a palette with dried paints on it, which had replaced a broken window. I asked about the *Madonna.* The woman of the house did not understand what I wanted. Mikhailov explained to her that we wanted to see the painting at which he had looked when he had been here before. She led us into the next room, and we saw the *Madonna,* which was doing service as a patch on an old screen. I offered her ten rubles for the painting, and she readily agreed. I rolled up my precious purchase, and we left the widow rejoicing over her ten rubles.

The next day I said good-bye to all my acquaintances and left our Northern Palmira—I believe, forever. Our unforgettable Karl the Great was dying in Rome.

January 25, 1856-October 4, 1856

Translated by John Weir

DIARY

(EXCERPTS)

June 12, 1857

The first remarkable event to be entered in my notes is that while trimming this first notebook for those notes, I broke my penknife. The event would seem too trivial to be mentioned as something extraordinary in this motley book. If that incident had taken place in the capital or even in a sizable provincial city, it would not, naturally, have found its way into my memorandum book. But it occurred in the Kirghiz steppe, i.e., in the Novopetrovsk fortress, where for a literate person, such as I, that item comes dear; and what's most important, it cannot always be acquired even for a considerable sum of money.... Now it is clear why in the Novopetrovsk fortress the loss of a penknife is an event that deserves to be recorded. But let them be—both the fortress and the knife; soon, God willing, I will break out of this boundless prison. And then such happenings won't find a place in my journal.

June 13

...I ought to have started my journal when I was first pressed into the armed forces, namely, in 1847. By now it would have been an exceedingly thick and an exceedingly boring notebook. Recalling those past ten sad years, I am heartily glad that the happy thought to provide myself with a notebook did not strike me at that time. What would I have jotted down in it? It is true that during those ten years I saw things gratis which not everyone manages to see even for money. But how did I see all this? As a prisoner sees a gay marriage procession

through the bars of his prison window. The very recollection of what took place and what I saw during that time sets me shuddering. And how would it be if I had recorded the gloomy scenery and the soulless, coarse *dramatis personae* with whom I had to act out that sombre, monotonous, ten-year drama? Oh my insidious memory, let my past be buried! We shall not trouble the hearts of loving friends with unworthy reminiscences, we shall forget and forgive our ignorant tormentors as the merciful Lover of Mankind forgave His cruel crucifiers. We shall turn our face to that which is bright and serene like our Ukrainian autumn evenings, and we shall write down all that we see and hear and all that the heart dictates.

I have received a letter from Petersburg, from Mikhail Lazarevsky,[88] dated May 2, with 75 rubles enclosed. He informs me of, or rather, congratulates me on my liberation. As yet, however, there is nothing from the corps headquarters, and I am waiting for orders from the above-mentioned headquarters....

This evening was made memorable by the arrival of a steamship from Astrakhan. But since that event took place quite late, at nine o'clock, I will not receive the news which the boat has brought until the morning.... Perhaps Cossack Father Kukharenko[89] took a notion to write me? That would really make me indebted to the old Black Sea veteran. That truly noble person is an extraordinary phenomenon among people. All my friends were obliged to sever all relations with me as from 1847 by order of the highest authorities. Kukharenko was not aware of such an order. Neither did he know where I was located. But when he was in Moscow at the coronation as a deputy from his Cossack regiment, he got acquainted with old man Shchepkin[90] and learned from him where I was imprisoned. And, noblest of friends! He wrote me a most sincere, heartfelt letter. After nine years and not to forget a friend, and a friend in misfortune at that. That's a rare phenomenon among selfish humankind. Along with that letter, to celebrate, as he writes, his having received the Stanislav order first class, he sent me twenty-five rubles in

silver. For a family man of modest means that is a big contribution. I don't know how and when I will reimburse him for that sincere, open-hearted offering?

On receipt of this friendly, unexpected greeting, I planned my journey in the following manner. I would ride through Kizlyar and Stavropol to Yekaterinodar directly to Kukharenko. After looking my fill at his noble, expressive features, I proposed to journey through the Crimea, to Kharkov, Poltava, Kiev and then to Minsk, Nyesvizh and, at last, to the village of Chirkovichi, and then, having embraced my friend and prison comrade Bronislaw Zaleski,[91] to drive through Vilno to Petersburg. That plan was altered by M. Lazarevsky's letter of May 2. From that letter I perceived that without stopping anywhere I must hasten to the Academy of Arts and kiss the hands and feet of Countess Nastasia Ivanovna Tolstoy and her magnanimous husband, Count Fyodor Petrovich.[92] They are the people solely responsible for my deliverance, and to them I owe my first obeisance. Apart from gratitude, plain politeness demands it. That is the main reason why I chose the thirty-day monotonous boat trip up Mother Volga, instead of the dashing troika. But I still do not know for certain whether that will take place. It may well happen that wrapped in a chlamys of shame and with a knapsack over my shoulder I will yet march to Battalion No. 1 headquarters at Uralsk. Anything can yet happen. Therefore I shouldn't give too much rein to my indefatigable imagination. But I'd better sleep on it. We will see what tomorrow brings. Or rather, what the Guryev mail will have brought.

June 14

...What curious event shall I describe today? Here is one. Yesterday's steamboat delivered itself of a sizable sack of rubles in silver and bills. That was the garrison's tertiary pay. The officers got theirs today and this very day they carried it to Popov (canteen-keeper) and the tavern-keeper, and they sent what was left also to the tavern-keeper and began to carouse, or rather, to have a drunken orgy. Tomorrow the soldiers will be given their

pay, and the soldiers too will begin to carouse, i.e., go on a drunken spree. This will continue for several days. And both the soldiers' and the officers' drinking bouts will end up in fights and, in the end, in the chicken-house, i.e., the guard-house.

Soldiers are the poorest, the most pitiable estate in our Orthodox fatherland. Everything that goes to make life beautiful has been taken away from him: family, homeland, freedom, in a word—everything. It is forgivable for him sometimes to drown his sore, lonely soul in a bottle of raw vodka. But the officers, to whom everything has been given, all human rights and privileges, in what way do they differ from the poor soldier? (I am speaking about the Novopetrovsk garrison.) In no way do they differ, poor fellows, except in their uniform....

June 16

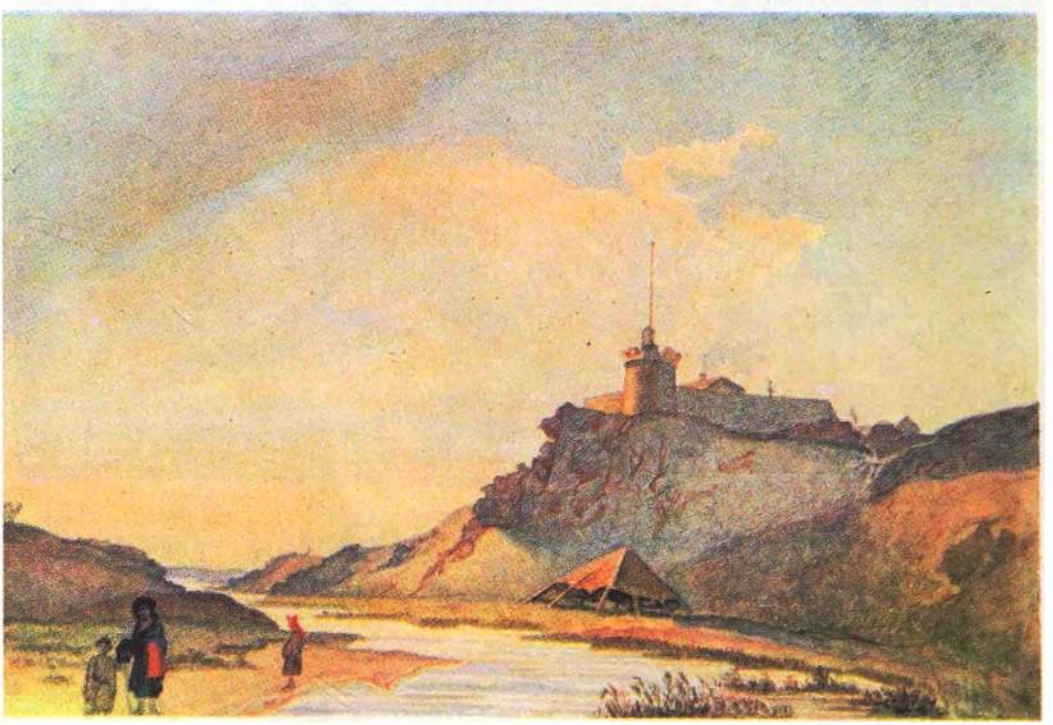
Today is Sunday. I spent the night in the kitchen garden. In the morning I went to the fortress. I was prevented from returning to the garden by rain (a very rare phenomenon) and I remained to dinner at Mostowski's. Mostowski is the only person in all the garrison whom I like and respect. He is not a gossip-monger, he's not a shallow person, but an orderly and sedate man with a noble heart. He speaks Russian poorly, but he knows the Russian language better than do the graduates of the Nyepluyevsky Cadet School. He served in the artillery of the former Polish army during the uprising of the Poles in 1830, was taken prisoner and made a private in the Russian army. I heard many exceptionally interesting details about the 1830 revolution from him. Worth noting is that here we have a Pole telling of his own feats and failures without the slightest embellishment, which is a rare trait in a military person, and what is more, in a Pole. In a word, Mostowski is a good enough man, although his character is dry and prosaic....

June 17

Today, at four o'clock in the morning, I went to the garden. The morning was peaceful and beautiful. Only

Taras Shevchenko. "Self-Portrait in the Uniform of a Private". Pencil. 1847

Taras Shevchenko. "A Shore of the Aral Sea". Water-colour. 1848-1849

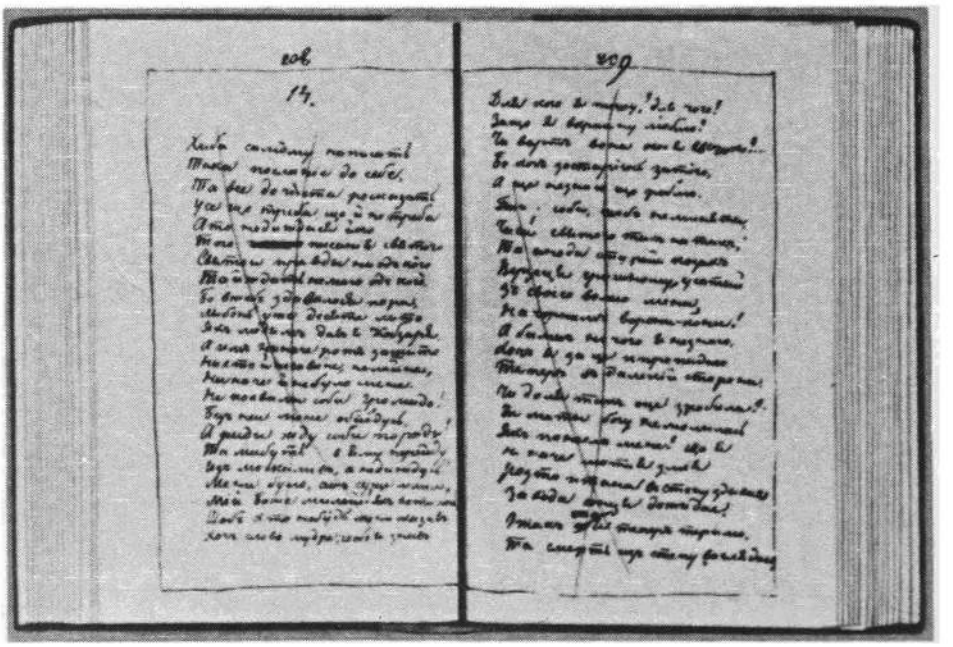


Taras Shevchenko. "Kara-Butak". Water-colour. 1848-1850.

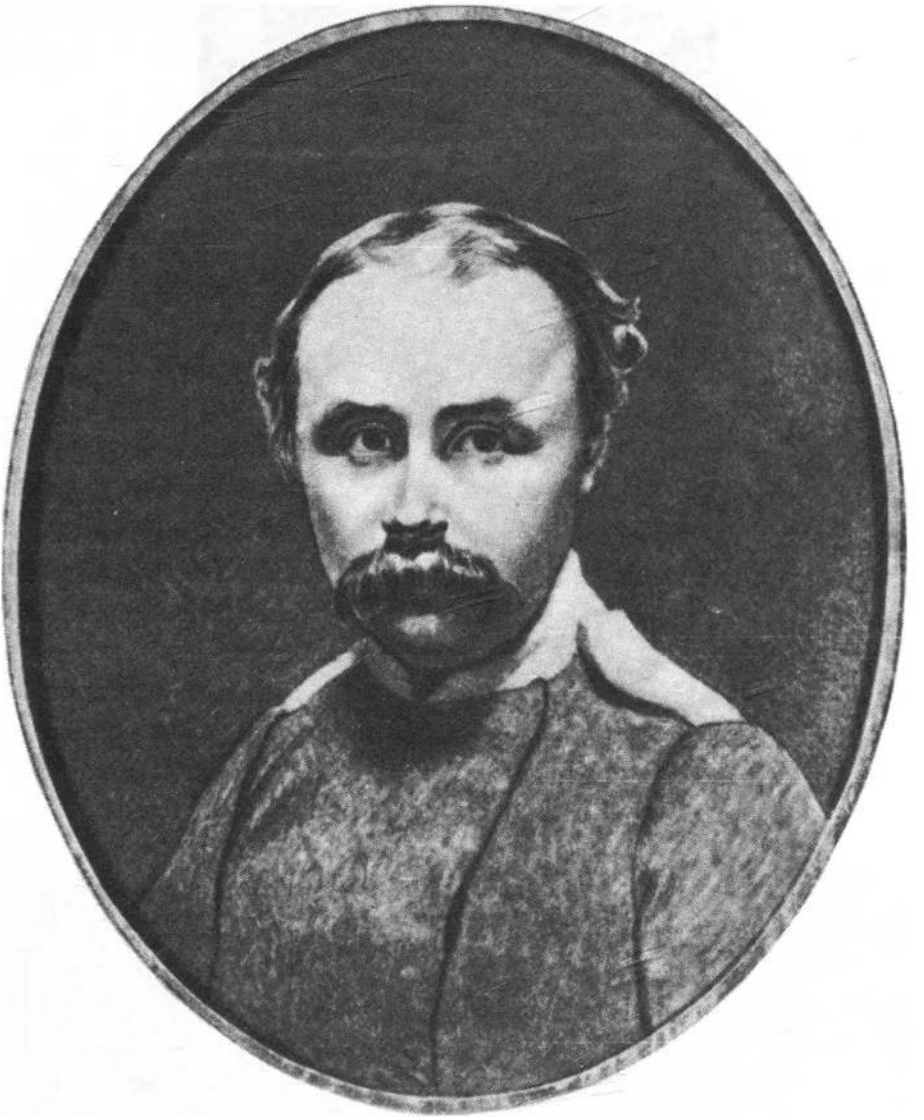
Portrait of A. I. Butakov. Photograph. Middle of the 19th century

Taras Shevchenko. "A Fortress. View from the Dockyard on Syr-Daria". Water-colour. 1848

Taras Shevchenko. "Schooners Near the Fort Kos-Aral". Water-colour. 1848-1849

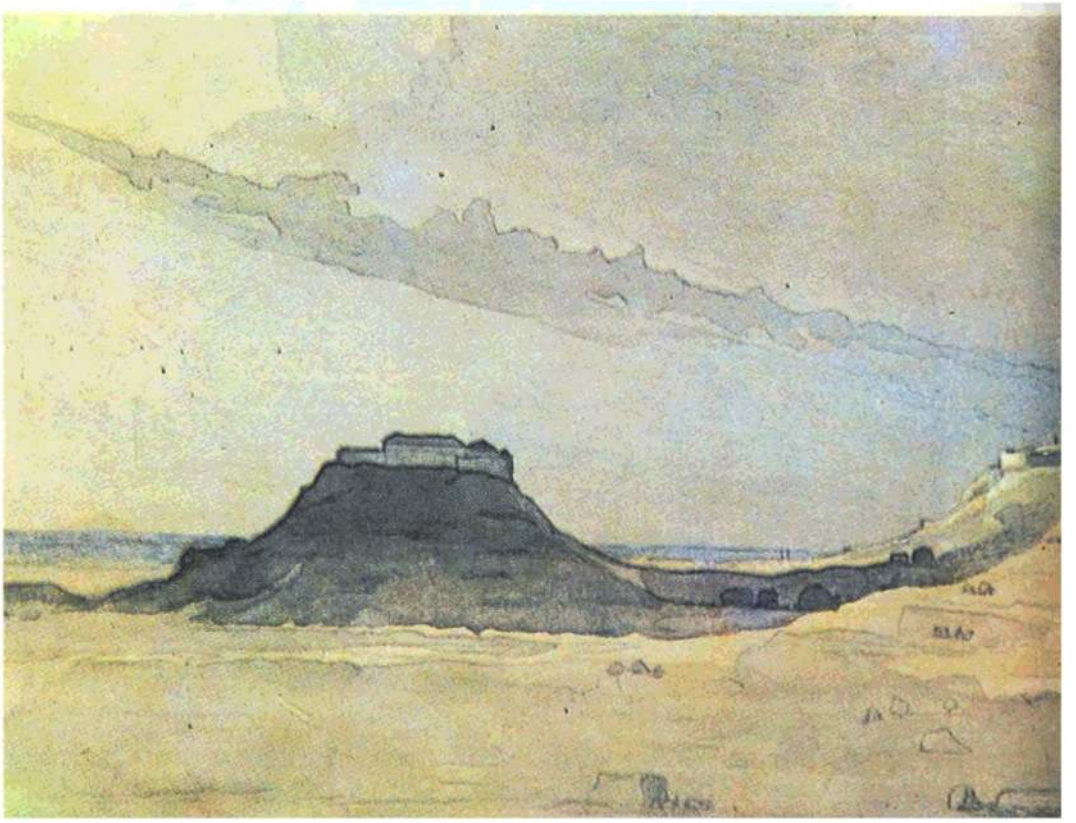


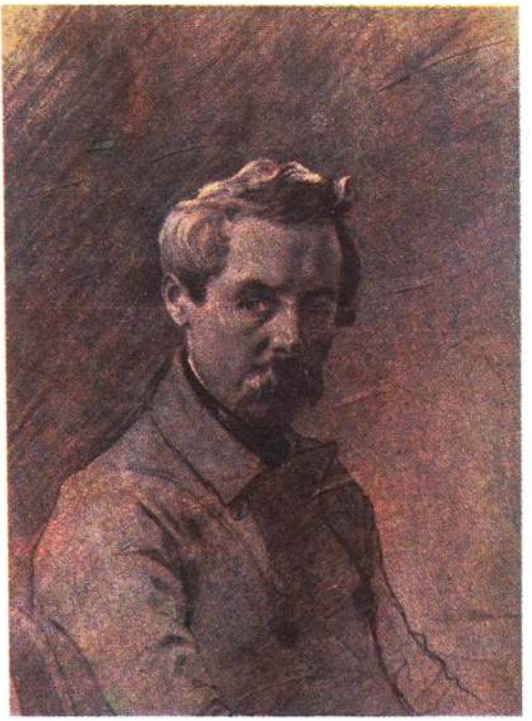
The miniature note-book Taras Shevchenko carried in the leg of his boot when he was in exile. 1847-1850



Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Sepia. 1849

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of A. Y. Uskova. Sepia. 1853-1854



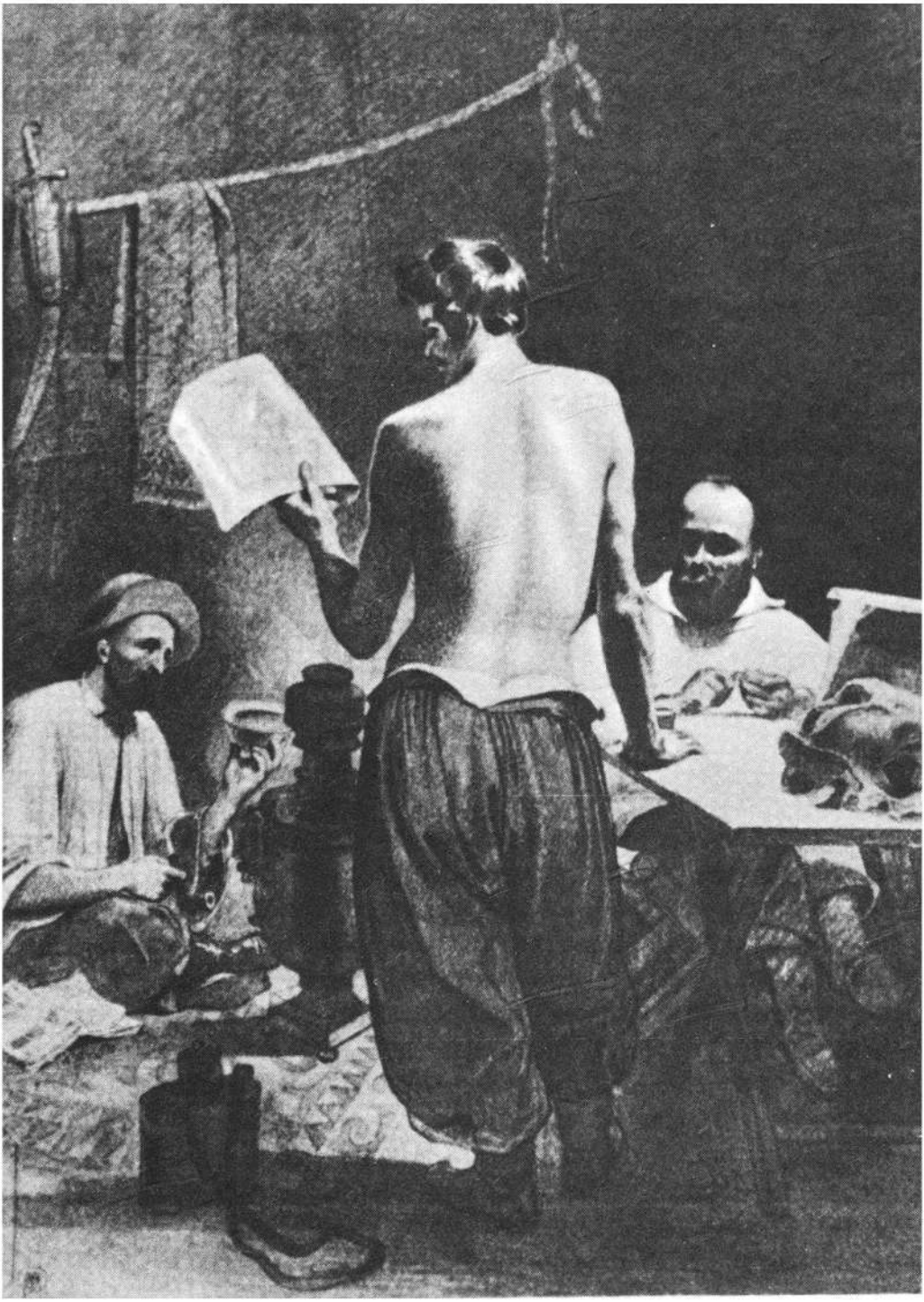


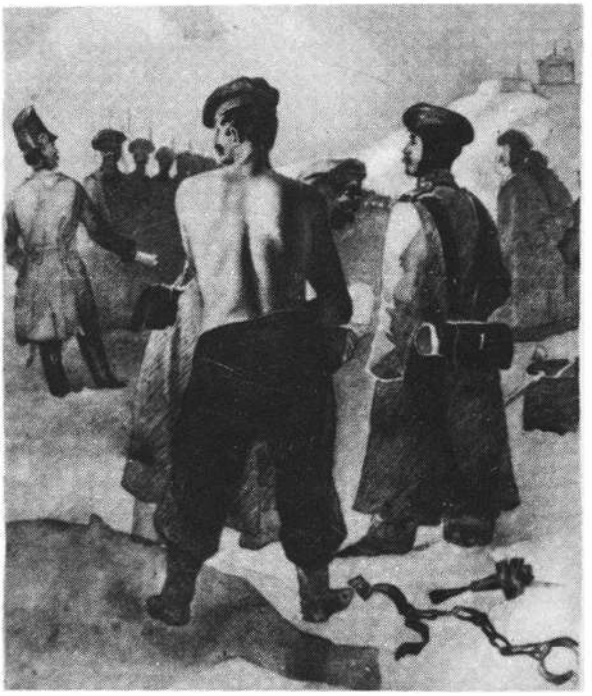
Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of I. A. Uskov.
Black chalk, white lead. 1853-1857

Taras Shevchenko. "The Novopetrovskoye Stronghold from the Khiva Road". Water-colour. 1856-1857

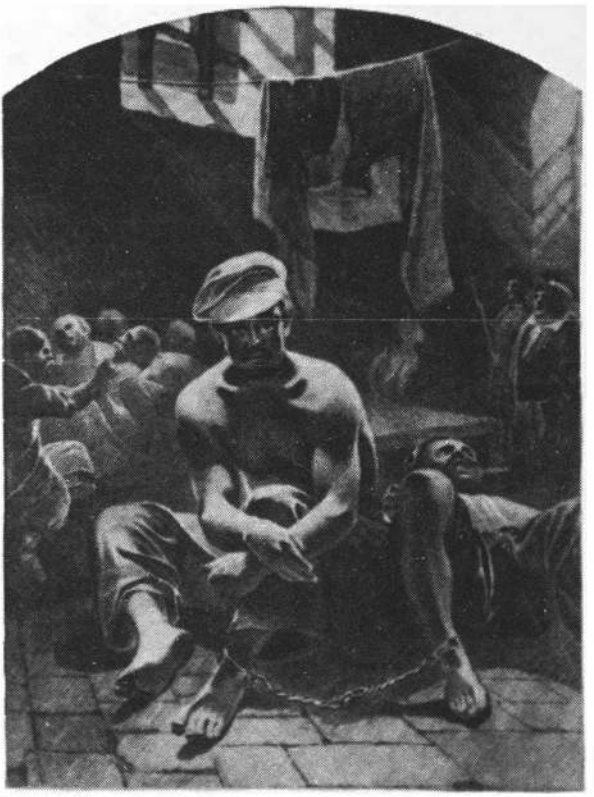
Taras Shevchenko. "A Kazakh Girl". Sepia. 1856-1857

Taras Shevchenko. "Beggars". Sepia. 1853

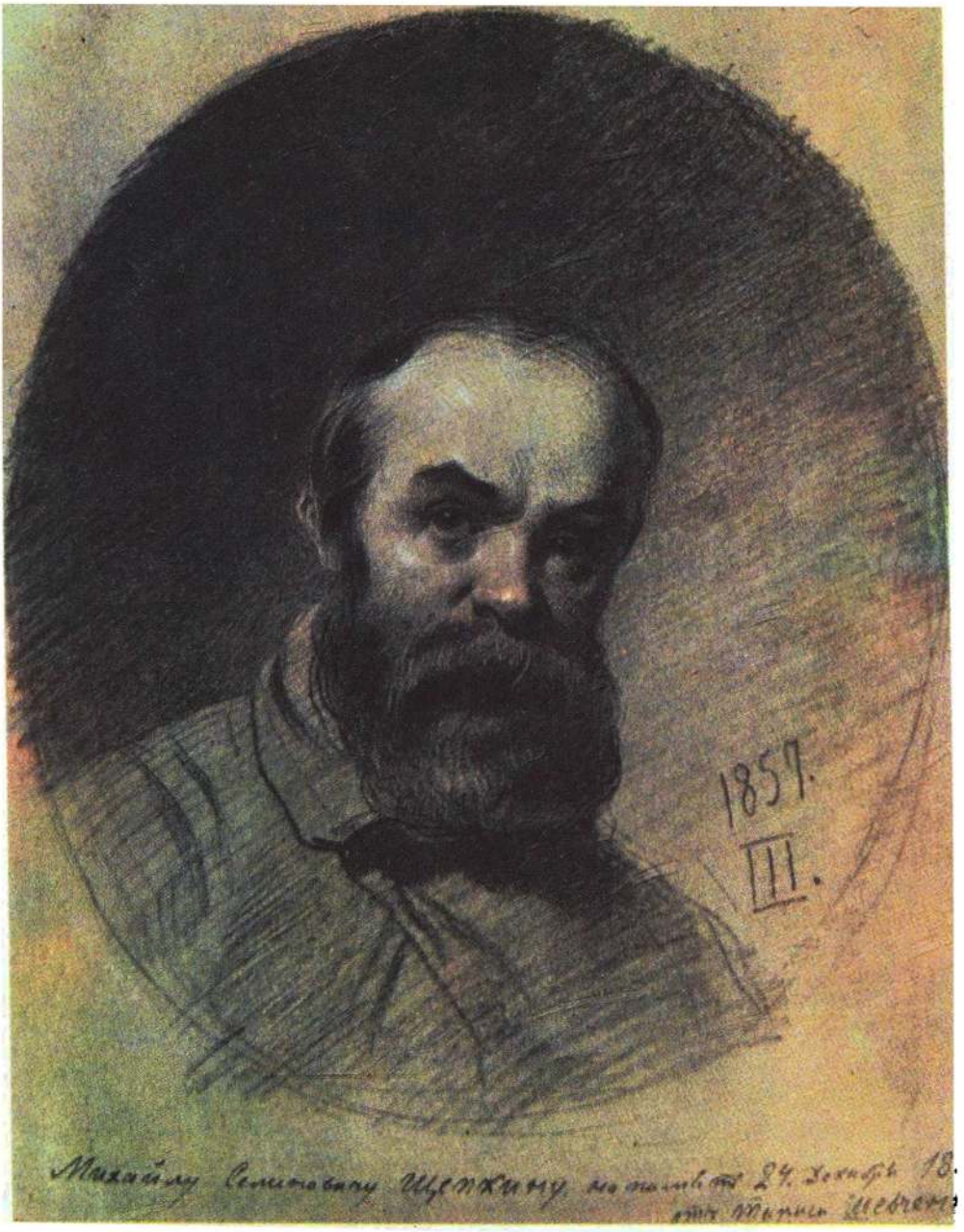




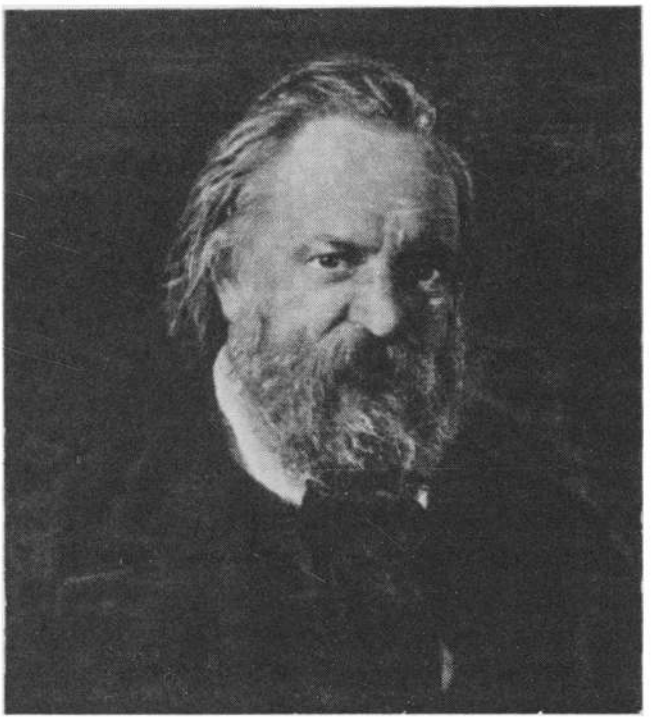
Taras Shevchenko. "Running the Gauntlet". (From the series "Prodigal Son"). India ink, bister. 1856-1857



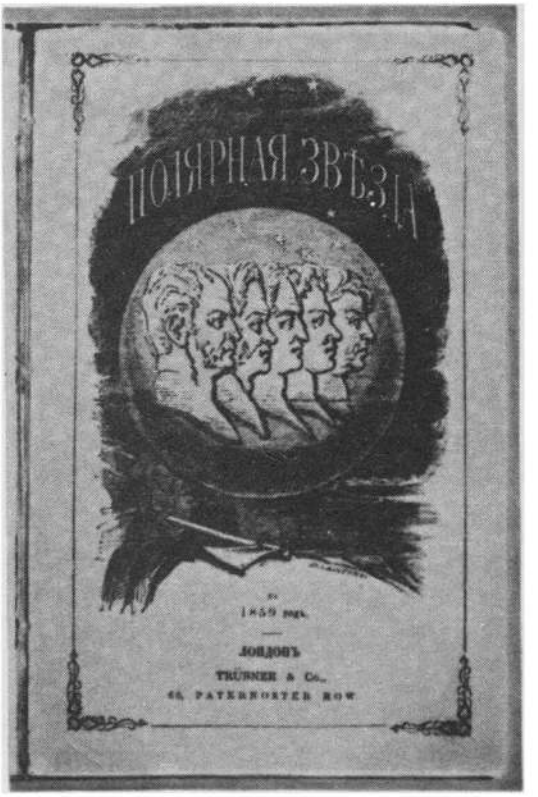
Taras Shevchenko. "In Prison". (From the series "Prodigal Son"). India ink, bister. 1856-1857



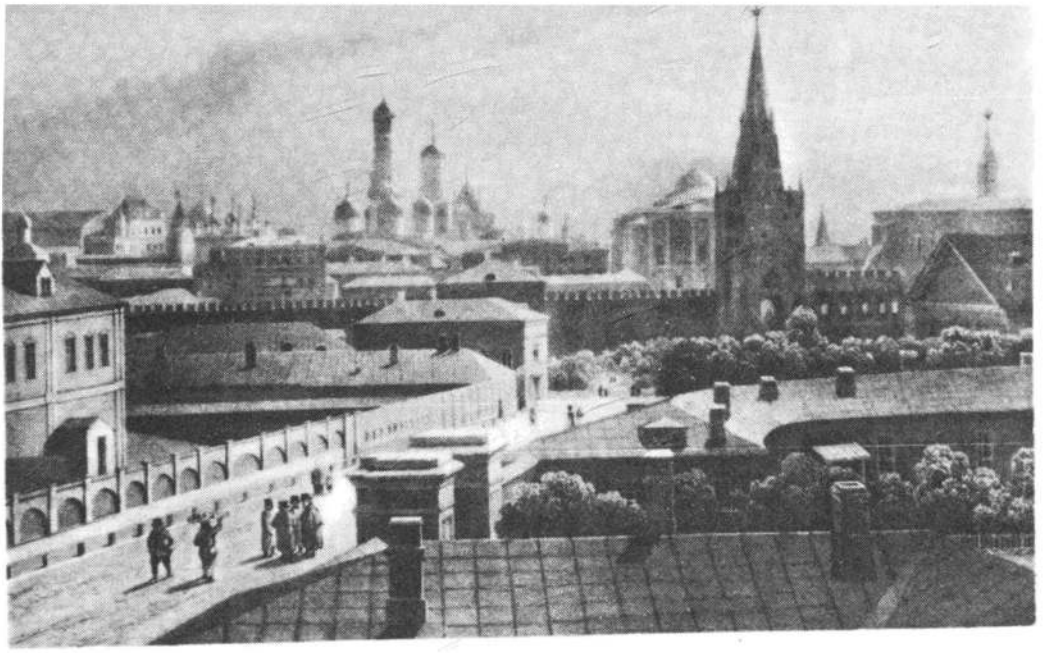
Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Black chalk and white pencil. 1857



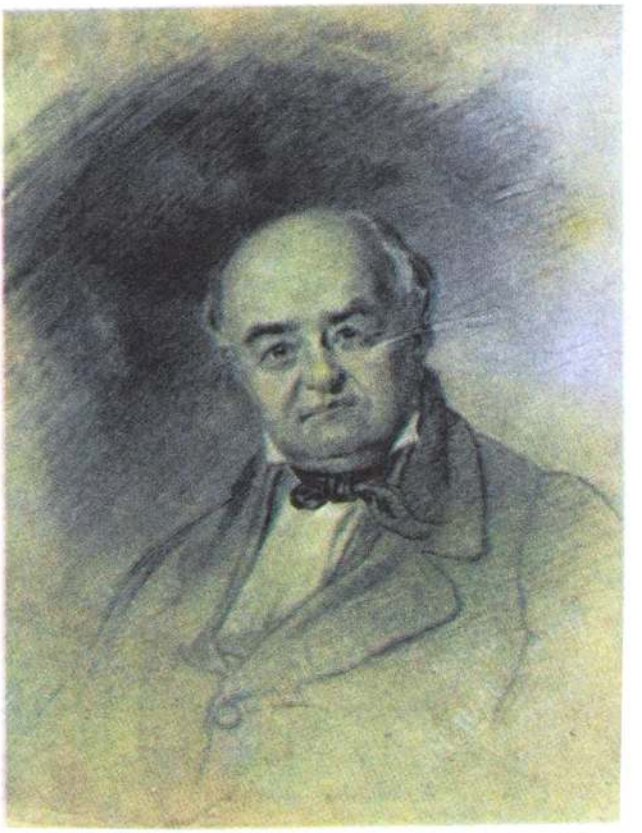
Nikolai Ghe. Portrait of A. I. Herzen.
Oil. 1867



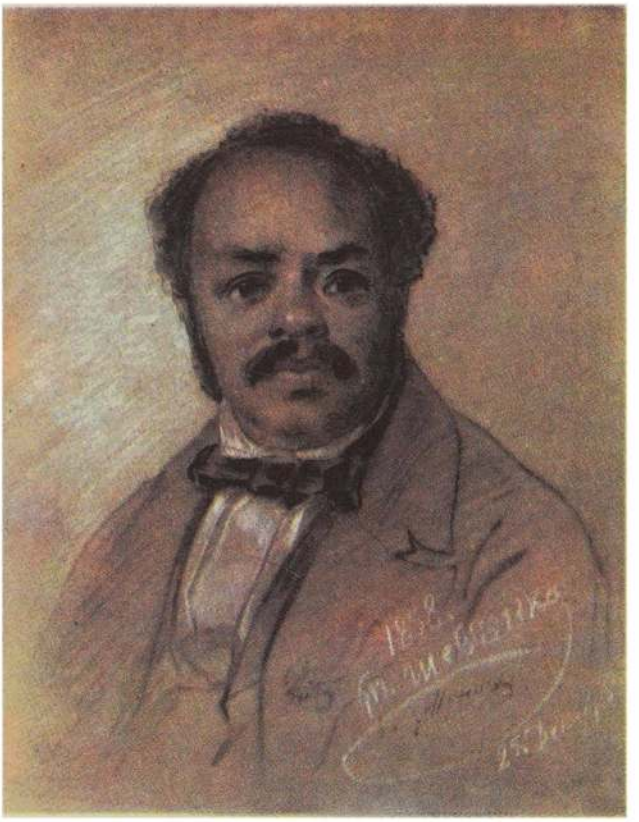
Title page of the journal
Polyarnaya Zvezda, London, 1859



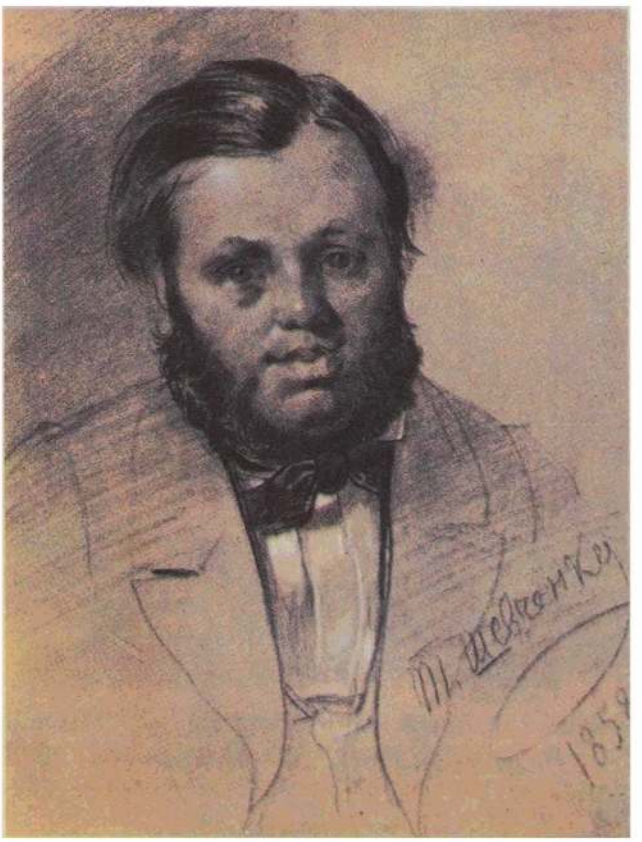
View of the Moscow Kremlin from Nikolsky Gate. Middle of the 19th century



Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of Mikhail Shchepkin. Black chalk and white pencil. 1858

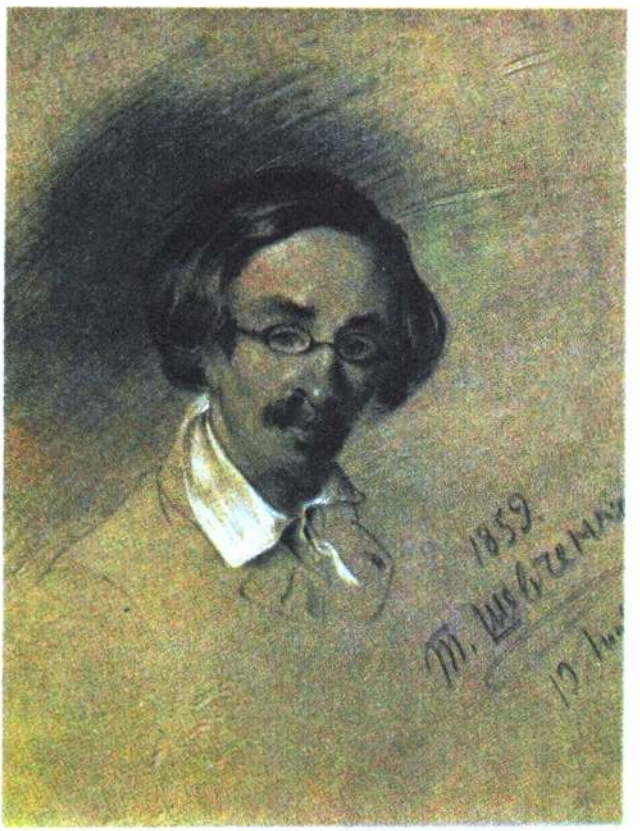


Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of Ira Aldridge. Black chalk and white pencil. 1858



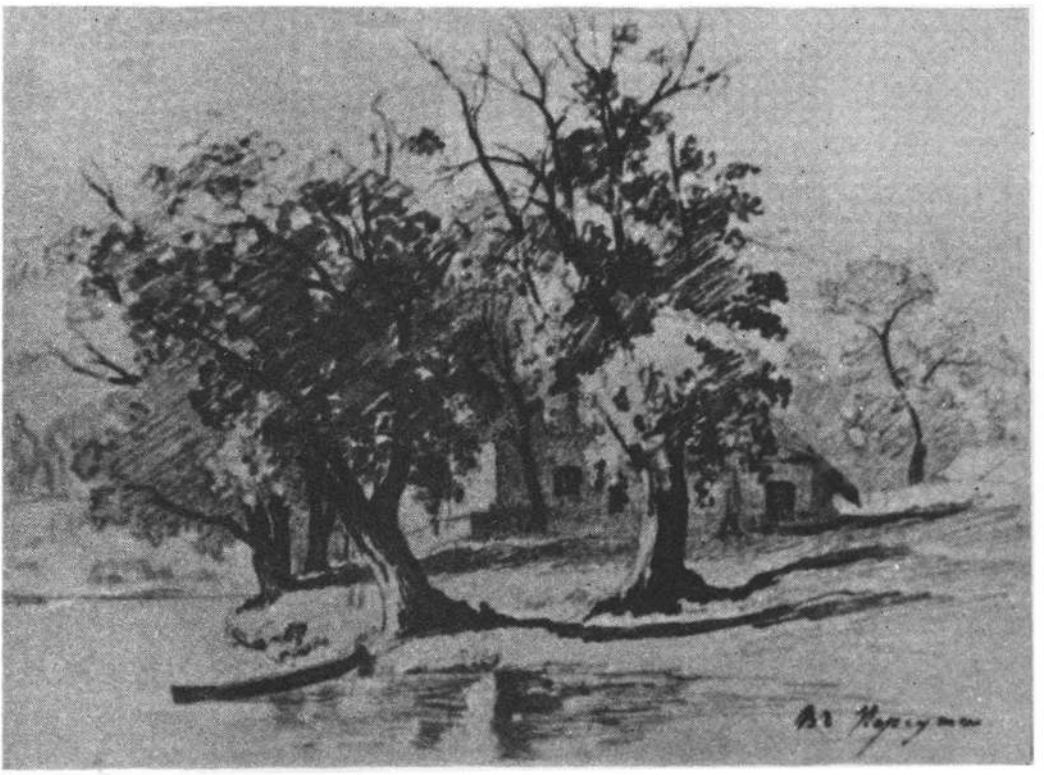
Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of M. M. Lazarevsky. Black and white chalk. 1858

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of M. F. Maximovich.
Black and white chalk. 1859



Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of M. A. Maximovich.
Black and white chalk. 1859

Taras Shevchenko among friends. Photograph by A. I. Denier. 1859



Taras Shevchenko. "In Korsun". India ink. 1859

the orioles and swallows disturbed the drowsy and sweet silence of the morning. For some time now, ever since I was permitted to seclude myself, I have become extraordinarily fond of solitude. Precious solitude! There can be nothing in life sweeter or more charming than solitude, especially when you are face-to-face with that smiling, blooming beauty, Mother Nature. Under the influence of her sweet, magic charm, a man involuntarily becomes deeply immersed in himself and sees God on the earth, as the poets say. I never like noisy activity or rather, noisy inactivity, not even previously. But after ten years of barrack life, solitude seems to me to be truly heaven. And I still don't undertake to do anything. I haven't the slightest desire to work. I sit or lie in silence for hours at a time under my favourite willow, and nothing ripples the imagination, not even for a joke. Absolutely nothing. Real stagnation. This wearying condition has set in since April 7, i.e., from the day I received the letter from M. Lazarevsky. I have become completely absorbed in my forthcoming freedom and the journey. It is a good thing that Kulish[93] thought of sending me some books, or else I would not have known what to do with myself. I am particularly grateful to him for the *Notes on South Russia.* I will soon be able to recite that book by heart. It reminded me so vividly, so marvellously of my beautiful, poor Ukraine, that I seemed to be talking with her lyrists and minstrels as though they were alive. A most excellent and noble work. A gem amid contemporary historical literature....

June 18

Today, as yesterday, at exactly the same early hour of the morning, I went to the garden, lay for a long time under the willow, listened to the oriole, and at last, fell asleep. In a dream I saw the Mezhigorsky Spass Monastery, the Dzvonkovaya Krinitsya and then the Vidubetsky Monastery. And later Petersburg, my beloved Academy. Of recent I have begun to dream of familiar objects which I haven't seen for a long time. Will I soon see all this in reality? The dream left its benign influence on me during

the whole day, the more so since today the Guryev, i.e., the Orenburg mail was to arrive. Toward evening the mail actually did arrive, but it brought nothing for me or about me. Again my face fell. Again disappointment and endless waiting. They had plenty of time to come to a decision about me at the corps headquarters between April 16 and now. In the evening I returned to the fortress and was ordered by the sergeant-major to prepare for inspection. That's the result of the long awaited mail and the freedom for which I waited so tremulously. It's hard, inexpressibly hard! In the end I'll go mad from this endless waiting.

With what speed and enthusiasm the order for arrest is carried out, and to the contrary, how sluggishly and coldly is carried out the order for release. And yet both are the will of one and the same person. The executors are the same in both cases. Why the difference? This same month in 1847 I was delivered from Petersburg to Orenburg on the seventh day. And now God grant that some battalion commander orders the state-owned articles to be taken from me and my maintenance stopped on the seventh month. That's the pattern, but I can't make sense out of such an inhuman pattern.

June 19

Yesterday the steamboat left for Guryev and will bring back from there the Second Company and the battalion commander himself. It is due to the arrival of such an important personage that the company which remained here, to which I also belong, is preparing for inspection. For this important impending event, today I was fitted out with military accoutrements. What a vile impending event! How endless and repugnant this army outfitting is! Can it be that this isn't the last time I'll be led out on the compound to be exhibited like a dumb animal? Shame and humiliation! It is hard, difficult, impossible to subdue all human dignity in oneself, to stand at attention, to listen to commands and move like a soulless machine. And this is the only method, tested by experience, to kill people like yourself by the thousands at one time. A

brilliant invention! It brings honour to Christianity and enlightenment.

It is strange that even such sensible people as, for example, our doctor, Nikolsky, like to watch how a man, blue from exertion, stretches out the toe of his boot. I don't understand such inhuman pleasure. But our esteemed Hippocrates sits for hours at the wicket gate, braving heat and cold, and delights in the abasement of his fellow-men. It seems that you're a butcher by calling, and a doctor only by title.... And my perfidious fate had to torment me so poisonously and maliciously, pitching me into the very dregs of this Christ-worshipping set. Even if I were a monster, a vampire, even then it would be impossible to invent a worse torture for me than to be transported as a private to the Detached Orenburg Corps. And in addition to all that, I have also been forbidden to paint. To take away from me the noblest part of my poor existence! A tribunal under the chairmanship of Satan himself could not have brought down such a cold, inhuman sentence. But the soulless executors of the sentence carried it out with revolting precision.

The pagan Augustus, banishing Nazo to the savage Getae, did not forbid him to write and to paint. But the Christian N(icholas) forbade me the one and the other. Both were torturers. But one of them was a Christian torturer, and a Christian of the nineteenth century, before whose eyes the most immense state in the world grew up on the foundation of Christian precepts. The Florentine Republic was a semi-savage, frenzied, medieval Christian state, but still it dealt with its refractory citizen, Dante Alighieri, as a material Christian state. God forbid that I should compare myself to those martyrs and beacons of humanity. I am only comparing the material, coarse pagan and the semi-illuminated medieval Christian with the Christian of the nineteenth century.

I am not certain to what I am obliged that during the ten years I was not promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer. Was it the stubborn antipathy which I nurse to that privileged caste? Or my insurmountable Ukrainian obstinacy? Both, it seems to me. On that

unforgettable day when my sentence was passed, I told myself that they would never make a soldier of me. And they haven't. I didn't learn a single item of the rifle manual, not even superficially. And that flatters my vanity....

There's a second and no less important reason why I was not promoted. The soulless satrap and confidant of the tsar imagined that I had been freed from the serfdom and educated at the tsar's expense, and by way of gratitude I had painted a caricature of my benefactor. So—let the ingrate suffer, then. I don't know where that absurd fairy-tale originated. I only know that it has cost me dear. It must be presumed that this fairy-tale was concocted when my sentence was passed, at the end of which it was written: "Most strictly to be forbidden to write and to paint." I was forbidden to write because of my subversive verses in the Little Russian[94] language. But the supreme judge himself doesn't know why I was forbidden to paint. The enlightened executor of the tsar's commands himself explained the inexplicable in that sentence and pressed me down with his soulless omnipotence. A cold, degenerate heart. And that rotten old roue enjoys the reputation here of a generous and magnanimous benefactor of the territory. How short-sighted, or rather, how base are those foul praise-mongers. A satrap loots the territory which has been entrusted to him and donates necklaces worth tens of thousands to his dissolute charmers, and they glorify his generosity and benefactions. Scoundrels!

June 20

Today the company will arrive in Guryev, and on account of the high water in the Ural it will go directly to the Streletskaya Kossa and this very day will board the steamboat. Tomorrow morning the boat will lift anchor and day after tomorrow the company will disembark at Novopetrovsk harbour. Steady, our officers! A storm, a terrible storm is approaching. Like Zeus, the driver of storm-clouds, the battalion commander is coming in gloomy cloud upon you, and at the same time on us, the

mute ones. In expectation of this dreaded judge and executioner, those who drank themselves nervy are acting up and beg our Aesculapius to invent and regularly certify that they are suffering from fantastic illnesses of the body and the spirit, more the spirit, and in that manner to save them from righteous judgement at the hands of the thunder-bearing Zeus. But the gloomy Aesculapius is inexorable. Nikolsky reserves hospital cots and prescribes laxatives only for our kind—the privates, who also have drunk themselves naked and have nothing in which to face our commander....

There's another odd thing. All this inscrutable grief, all sorts of humiliation and insult, have bypassed me, as it were. They have not left the slightest imprint on me. It is said that experience is the best teacher. But bitter experience has passed me by invisibly. Not a single trait of my inner make-up has changed. Is that good? It's good. At least, that's how it appears to me. And I thank my Almighty Creator from the bottom of my heart that He did not allow those terrible experiences to affect my convictions and my childishly radiant beliefs with their iron claws. Some things have become clearer, more rounded out and have assumed a more natural size and appearance. But that is the consequence of imperturbably flying old Saturn, and in no way the consequence of bitter experiences.

Having received a letter from Kukharenko with twenty-five rubles enclosed, which is a very substantive enclosure, I repaid him with a letter, enclosing my personal portrait, and another letter with an even less substantive enclosure. The enclosure of an imaginary tale by a supposed fugitive, entitled *The Muscovite's Well.* I wrote it soon after receiving the letter from Kukharenko. The verses proved to be almost as good as my previous verses. Somewhat harder and rather curt. But that's nothing, God grant me to break out to freedom and they will flow from me more fluently, more freely, and be more simple and gay. Will I ever live to see that limping sorceress—freedom?

June 26

Two days have already gone by since our commanding officer left us, but I still can't rid myself of the depressing influence inspired by his brief presence. That abominable inspection so squashed my bright, rose-coloured hopes, and discouraged me so much, that if I didn't have Lazarevsky's letter in my hands, I would have weakened completely under the weight of that depressing influence. But, God be praised, I do have that priceless document; that means that I have a canvas on which I can embroider the most fanciful and intricate of arabesques.

The late Goethe said that insignificant minds live on hope. The late sage spoke but half the truth. Hope is characteristic of both little and big minds, and even of the most practical and positive ones. It is our most tender nurse and lover, constant and unfailing until death. It is beautiful and it constantly nurtures the credulous imagination of the almighty tsar, the world-renowned sage, the poor ploughman, and miserable me, and lulls the doubting mind with its fairy-tales, which every one of us so readily believes. I don't mean that we do it unrestrainedly. The mind that believes that pears grow on a willow-tree is truly insignificant. But why shouldn't I believe that I will be in Petersburg by winter for certain? I will see people dear to my heart, the beautiful Academy and the Hermitage, which I haven't seen yet, and I will listen to the sorcery of the opera. Oh how sweet, how unutterably sweet it is to believe in that wonderful future. I would be an indifferent, cold atheist if I didn't believe in that beautiful god, that fascinating hope.

Here is how I intend to arrange my material existence, with the assistance of my friends, of course. I can't even think of painting now. That would be like believing that pears can grow on willows. Even previously I was less than a mediocre painter. All the more so now. Ten years without practice can transform even a great virtuoso into a common pot-house balalaika-strummer. Consequently, I mustn't even think about painting. I'm thinking of devoting myself whole-heartedly to aquatint engraving. For this I plan to limit my material subsistence as much as

possible and to strenuously apply myself to that art. At intervals I will copy famous paintings in sepia, making drawings for future plates. I think that two years of diligent work will be sufficient for that. Then I will go to my dear Little Russia for cheap living and will take up the making of the prints, my first plate to be *The Barracks* from Teniers's painting. That's the painting of which my unforgettable teacher, the great Karl Bryullov, said that it would be worth while to travel all the way from America to take a look at that marvellous creation. The great Bryullov's opinion in these matters can be believed.

I now like engraving best of all the fine arts. And not without reason. To be a good engraver means to be a disseminator of the beautiful and instructive in society. It means to be a disseminator of the light of truth. It means to be useful to people and pleasing to God. The engraver's work is most beautiful and noble. Without your miracle-working chisel, how many of the finest works, available only to the wealthy, would keep gathering dust in gloomy galleries? The engraver's calling is divine!

In addition to copies of the works of masters, I am thinking in time to publish in aquatint engraving my own child, *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*, adapted to the contemporary taste of the merchants. I divided that instructive parable into a series of twelve drawings, all of which are practically finished on paper. But there still remains the long and assiduous labour of bringing them to the stage where they can be transferred to copper. The general idea is quite well suited to our coarse merchantry. But its fulfilment has proved beyond my powers. What is wanted is dexterity, keenness, accuracy, and above all, not a caricature, but dramatic sarcasm more than mockery. It needs diligent labour to achieve that. And advice from people who know. It is too bad that the late Fedotov didn't stumble on that rich idea, for he would have made the finest of satires of it for the benefit of our ignorant semi-Tatar merchants.

It seems to me that satire is imperative in our time and for our semi-literate middle class, but it must be wise and noble satire. Such as Fedotov's *The Bridegroom*, for

example, or Ostrovsky's *We're Not Strangers—We'll Come to Terms*, or Gogol's *The Inspector-General.* Our young middle class is like a lazy schoolboy who has got stuck on the syllables and won't and can't get past that stage without prodding from the teacher. There is no need to pay attention to the vices and shortcomings of our upper class. First, because that class is so small numerically, and secondly, because its moral ailments are of such long standing—and if chronic ailments can be cured, it is only by truly heroic measures. The gentle means of satire is useless in this case. Moreover, has our tiny upper class any significance in the national sense? None, it seems to me. But the middle class is a huge and, unfortunately, semi-literate mass, it is half the people, it is the core of our nationality, and what it needs at this time is not a cheap Suzdal print of the parable of the prodigal son, but noble, fine and apt satire. I would consider myself the luckiest man in the world if my unintentional scoundrel, my prodigal son, whom I conceived so sincerely and open-heartedly, came out that way.

Here's an interesting story. I was told here two years ago by N. Danilevsky, a man who inspires confidence, that Ostrovsky's comedy, *We're Not Strangers—We'll Come to Terms*, was banned from the stage on the insistence of the Moscow merchants. If that was true, the satire hit its mark with utmost effect. But I can't understand why the government should undertake to foster ignorance and cheating. A strange measure!

June 27

I will pass from the merchants to the officers. The transition isn't sharp, it's even harmonious. That privileged caste also belongs to the middle class. The only difference is that the merchant is more polite than the officer. He addresses the officer as "sir". And the officer addresses him as "hey you!" That superficial distinction does not differentiate them at all, however, because they are blood-brothers by their upbringing. The only difference is that the officer is a follower of Voltaire, and the

merchant is an Old Believer. But in essence they're one and the same....

June 29

"The highway from heaven is wide, while the path to heaven is narrow and strewn with thorns," one old, dying woman used to tell me when I was yet a child. And she spoke the truth. A truth whose meaning I have only now fully realised.

The steamboat came from Guryev today and brought me nothing at all, not even a letter. I'm not expecting any letters, as a matter of fact, because my dear friends imagine that I've long since left this foul kennel. Oh, my true, faithful friends! If you knew what my ten-year-long torturers are doing to me at parting, you wouldn't believe it, because I myself find it difficult to believe such infamy. To me it seems like the continuation of a ten-year nightmare. And what does that delay portend? I can't explain it at all. Madame Eigert, writing from Orenburg on May 15, congratulates me on my liberation. But my liberty is making merry in a tavern somewhere with a smart-dealing clerk. And that's so, because my immediate torturers are enjoying themselves with inspections, drills, cards and drink, while their clerical duties are being taken care of by some clerk, Petrov, reduced to the ranks for swindling. That's how it has been done from time immemorial, and it would be contrary both to the behests of the fathers and the regulations of the armed services if the sacred legacy of the past generations was to be violated because of a Private Shevchenko.

A terrible depression is gnawing at my heart, and here I am amusing myself with jokes. And all that is the work of flighty hope. Surely, a person shouldn't hang himself because of some drunkard father-commander and his secretary, who is worthy of him....

July 1

Today I sent a letter to Lazarevsky by boat. Perhaps it will be the last from this suffocating prison—God grant it. I am at fault with my sincere friend. I should have replied

to his letter of May 2 as soon as I received it, i.e., on June 3. But in expectation of happy news from Orenburg, which I wanted him to be the first to know, I waited a whole month in vain and then was compelled to write him after all that I was not free and would remain exactly the same kind of soldier that I had been, until July 20 and perhaps until August, with the one difference that I am allowed to hire a substitute to stand guard duty for me and to sleep in the garden, which I do with gratitude. I have put all resentful thoughts off until July 20. In the mornings now I revel in the luxury of complete solitude and even in a glass of tea, even though it isn't specially good. If I could also stick a fine cigar in my mouth, like one of that bunch of twenty-five which my good friend Lazarevsky sent me, for example, I could easily imagine myself at a Peterhof festival. But that's too much already. And today there really is a festival in Peterhof. A magnificent royal festival! Once long ago, in 1836 if I'm not mistaken, I was so charmed by stories of that enchanting festival that without asking my master's permission (at that time I was apprenticed to a painter or so-called muralist, a certain Shirayev, a coarse and cruel individual), and braving the consequences of absence without leave (I knew for certain that he wouldn't give me leave) I ran off to Peterhof straight from work, in my ticking smock, which apprentices usually wear, and with a piece of black bread and fifty kopecks in coppers in my pocket. I must have been a sight. It's strange, and yet at that time I didn't find the magnificent Samson and the other fountains, and the festival generally, one-half as enjoyable as I had been led to believe I would. Perhaps my imagination had been fired too much by the descriptions, or else I was simply tired and hungry. The latter, probably. In addition, I saw my dreaded master with his dolled-up lady in the crowd. This last circumstance completely dimmed the brilliance and magnificence of the festival for me. So I returned without waiting for the fireworks, quite impassive to what had been. I got out of that scrape scot-free. They found me asleep in the attic next day and no one suspected that I had been away

without leave. To tell the truth, I myself considered it something in the nature of a dream.

I attended the Peterhof festival a second time in 1839 under different circumstances. The second time I accompanied my great teacher, Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, on the Berdov steamboat together with his other favourite pupils, Petrovsky and Mikhailov. A quick transition from the attic of a coarse muzhik painter to the splendid studio of the greatest painter of our century. I, myself, find it hard to believe, yet it was so. I, an insignificant smudge, was carried on wings from a filthy attic to the magnificent halls of the Academy of Arts. But what am I bragging about? In what way have I shown that I profited by the precepts and friendly confidence of the greatest artist in the world? In no way whatever. Up until his inappropriate marriage, and after his appropriate divorce, I lived in his quarters, or rather in his studio. And what did I do? What did I busy myself with in that sanctuary? It is strange, when you think of it. At that time I was busy composing the Little Russian verses which later descended with such terrible weight on my poor soul. I would fall into a reverie in front of his marvellous works, and in my heart I conjured up my blind kobzar andmy blood-thirsty Haidamaki. In the shade of his elegant and luxurious studio the martyred shades of our poor hetmans flashed before my eyes as though it were the scorching wild steppe along the Dnieper. Before me spread the steppe, dotted with burial mounds. Before me appeared my lovely, poor Ukraine in all its virginal, melancholy beauty. And I would get lost in thought and could not tear my spiritual eyes away from that dear, enchanting fascination. A calling, that's what it was.

It was a strange thing, that all-powerful calling. I well knew that my future profession, my daily bread, would be painting. But instead of studying its deep secrets, and that under the guidance of such a teacher as was the immortal Bryullov, I composed verses for which nobody paid me a penny, which finally cost me my freedom, and which, despite the almighty inhuman prohibition, I still keep scribbling on the sly. And at times I even think of

printing those whimpering scraggy children of mine (under another name, of course). That irrepressible calling is a strange thing indeed....

July 5

...What would I do without a book during such a long and unexciting journey as sailing up the Volga from Astrakhan to Nizhny (Novgorod)? That's what was bothering me. And really, what would I do a whole month without any kind of book at all? But fortune, that proud sovereign of the sovereigns of the world, the eyeless empress of the emperors, today is at my service....

After enjoying the beautiful, fresh morning in the garden, at nine o'clock I went to the fortress. I had to get some bread from the artel man and have it dried so I would have rusks during the journey. I came to the company office and saw three rather thick volumes in grey shabby paper-covers lying on the table next to a pair of model boots. I read the title. And what was it? *Estetyka czyli umnictwo piękne przez Karola Libelta.*[95] In the barracks! Aesthetics!

"Whose are those books?" I asked the clerk.

"Quartermaster Sergeant Kulikh's."

I sought out the above-mentioned Kulikh. When I asked him whether he would sell me *Umnictwo piękne,* he replied that it belonged to me. He told me that Przewlocki, when he was leaving Uralsk for his homeland, gave him, Kulikh, the books to be delivered to me. And that he, Kulikh, had brought them here with him, put them in the store-room and forgotten all about their existence, and that he happened to notice them only yesterday and is very glad that he can now deliver them to their owner. To celebrate I sent for vodka and put the books in my traveller's bag.

This is visible and tangible work on the part of my obliging factoress, fortune. Thus, thanks to that blind empress of the emperors, I have things to read during my journey which I hadn't counted on at all. The reading matter, to tell the truth, is not wholly to my taste, but

what can I do—where there are no fish, a crayfish will do.

July 8

This morning I invited Sergeant Kulikh, the same that brought me Libelt's *Umnictwo pięk*ne from Uralsk, to visit me in the garden. Our conversation, naturally, centred around the battalion and especially the Second Company, which had gone away from here two years ago and had now returned. Both then and now it has been my misfortune to belong to that company. We went over that company man by man, starting with the then company commander Lieutenant Obryadin, until we finally came to Private Skobelev. That Private Skobelev, despite his (Russian) surname, was a fellow-countryman of mine, a native of Kherson province. I remember him particularly for his Little Russian songs, which he sang amazingly simply and beautifully in his young, mellow tenor. He sang the following song with special expressiveness:

A tiny stream is flowing
Through the cherry orchard.

Listening to that charming song I would forget that I was in a barracks. It carried me away to the banks of the Dnieper, to freedom, to my dear motherland. And I will never forget that dark-complexioned semi-naked fellow, sewing patches on his shirt and carrying me far away from the stifling barracks with his artless singing.

By his build and manners he was not a bit like a dashing soldier, for which I especially respected him. But in the company he enjoyed the reputation of an honest and smart soldier. And despite his dark, coarse and pock-marked features, his face shone with courage and nobility. I loved him as a fellow-countryman and as a decent man, apart from the songs. He was a runaway serf, as he confided to me in secret. He had gone tramping, and when apprehended, declared he could not remember his home and family, and was enrolled in the army, where they had given him the surname Skobelev in honour of the Skobelev who was the famous jester of the *Russky*

Invalid. Kulikh told me the following outrageous story about that poor fellow Skobelev.

Soon after the Second Company arrived in the city of Uralsk, the company commander, Lieutenant Obryadin, took Private Skobelev as his constant attendant, because he was a sober and trustworthy soldier, though somewhat uncouth in appearance. Private Skobelev unintentionally became his commander's chargé d'affairs in matters of the heart and the constant servant of his mistress. Before six months had passed the clumsy Skobelev just as unintentionally became the lover of his ruler's mistress. One time, during a heart-to-heart effusion, the perfidious traitoress disclosed to Skobelev that two months previously Obryadin had received in his name ten rubles in silver from Moscow from a previous comrade (a fellow-tramp, probably), who was now a shopkeeper. As proof that she spoke the truth, she showed him the envelope with five stamps. Previously, when Lieutenant Obryadin had been the battalion adjutant and paymaster, he was not only suspected but there had even been proofs that he was stealing similar parcels. But he knew how to cover up his tracks somehow and to be generally considered a man of good repute. Learning of his commander's swindle, Skobelev confronted him with the empty packet, demanding the money that had been taken from it. The commander treated him to a cuff on the ear, and he returned in kind. If they had been alone, the matter would have ended there, but as the scene was played out before a high-born audience, the officers, the abashed Lieutenant Obryadin, having arrested Private Skobelev, turned in a report to the battalion commander on the event. In consequence of the report there was an investigation, and in consequence of the investigation Lieutenant Obryadin was ordered to retire from the service, while Private Skobelev was court-martialled. In fulfilment of the sentence passed on him by the court-martial, Private Skobelev ran the gauntlet, receiving 2,000 rods, and was banished to Omsk for seven years to the convicts' companies. It is a painful event, and unfortunately, not the only one of its kind.

Poor Skobelev! You were born and grew up in slavery. You thought to try the wide and sweet freedom road, and landed in Edikul (that's how soldiers usually call Novopetrovsk fortress), you flew into my seven-year prison like a song-bird from the Ukraine, as though only to remind me of my dear, poor homeland with your sweet, plaintive songs. Poor, luckless Skobelev! You honestly and nobly returned the blow of the high-born thief and robber, and for that decent act you ran the gauntlet and bore heavy chains to the wilderness on the banks of the Irtysh and the Om. In your new slavery will you meet such an attentive and grateful listener, a comrade of your plaintive, sweet songs, as I was? Yes, you will meet more than one such wretched prisoner as yourself, a fellow-countryman and branded outlaw, who will shed a tear of gratitude on your heavy irons for those consoling sounds from home, so dear to the heart. Poor, unfortunate Skobelev.

July 10

The wind doesn't let up. The melancholy doesn't go away. The rain continues to wash the new moon. It grants such lengthy favours here but rarely. I lay motionless in the summer-house all day and listened to the monotonous quiet melody made by the small, frequent raindrops falling on the wooden roof of the summer-house. However hard I tried, I couldn't fall asleep. The damned flies flew into the summer-house from all over the garden and gave me no peace. Several times I tried to build castles in the air with my future aquatint prints, also without success. Bryullov's *The Siege of Pskov* and *Genseric* especially were unsuccessful. Nudity must be avoided to begin with. What's needed is practice and more practice, or else that charming Bryullov nudity will come out ugly in the print. I wouldn't like my future prints to be like the Parisian aquatint print of the painting *The Last Days of Pompeii.* It's an uncouth, ugly print. A brilliant work has been profaned and made ugly.

While I was in such a bad mood of depressed spirits, I remembered Libelt's *Umnictwo pięk*ne and began to chew

on it: it is tough, sour and insipid. Real German soup-water. How, for instance, can a man who is so weightily dealing with inspiration, simple-mindedly give credence to the tale that Joseph Vernet asked that he be tied to the mast during a storm in order to receive inspiration. What a peasant conception of that unutterably divine feeling! And this is believed by a man who writes on aesthetics, treats of the ideal, the lofty and beautiful in the spiritual nature of man. No, I didn't succeed in aesthetics today, either. Libelt only writes in Polish, but feels (if he feels at all) and thinks in German. Or at any rate, he is permeated with German idealism (which used to be, I don't know whether it is now). He resembles our V. A. Zhukovsky in prose. He believes in the lifeless fascination of the scraggy and lanky German ideal just as the late Zhukovsky did.

When Zhukovsky returned from Germany in 1839 with a huge portfolio filled with works by Cornelius, Hess and other luminaries of the Munich school of painting, he found that Bryullov's works were too material, that they brought divine, high-flown art down to the sinful earth. Turning to the late Sternberg and me, who happened to be in Bryullov's studio, he asked us over to his place to enjoy and learn from the great German teachers. We did not fail to avail ourselves of this happy opportunity. The very next day we appeared in the Germanophile's study. But God! The things we saw in that huge portfolio that was opened before us! Tall, lifeless Madonnas, surrounded by skinny Gothic cherubs, and other biblical martyrs and martyrs of true, smiling art. We saw Holbein and Dürer, but no painters of the nineteenth century. How those German idealist painters have become fuddled. They didn't notice that in the architecture of Klenze, for which they created their ugly Gothic works, there isn't so much as a shade of anything Gothic....

I put Libelt's *Umnictwo pięk*[illegible] in my travelling bag and brought my frame down again to a horizontal position. I don't know what will be next.

Unforgettable, golden days, you flashed before me like a bright, joyous dream, leaving behind you indelible

traces of fascinating remembrances. At that time Sternberg and I were mere youngsters, and looking through that unique collection of sheer ugliness, we spoke our opinions aloud and brought gentle, delicate Vassily Andreyevich to such a state that he called us spoiled pupils of Karl Pavlovich and already was on the point of closing the portfolio on us, when Prince Vyazemsky entered the study and prevented Vassily Andreyevich from carrying out his good intention. We continued to leaf through the portfolio with unruffled indifference and were rewarded for our patience with the original sketches for *The Last Days of Pompeii*, skilfully outlined with a pen and lightly tainted with sepia. This brilliant sketch, which remained practically unchanged in the painting, was followed by several clumsy sketches by Bruni, which shocked us by their studied, monotonous ugliness. Where, and from what putrid source did Mr. Bruni take and assimilate that unnatural manner? Can the desire to be original alone have made the tireless Bruni's works so repulsive? A pitiful desire. A sad result. And that man even dared to pose as the equal of Karl the Great! (That's how V. A. Zhukovsky usually called Bryullov.)

An acquaintance of mine who is not an artist, but just a lover of fine arts, not even a connoisseur, looking at Bruni's painting *The Raiment of the Mother of God* in the Kazan Cathedral, said that if he was the mother of that repellent child which was lolling in the foreground of the painting, he would be afraid not only to take the little cretin in his arms, but even to come near it. An exceptionally true and apt comment! And what about his *Copper Serpent*? It's a mob of the most ugly actresses and actors, devoid of all talent. I saw that painting in its initial stage and was shocked by it. It created an unpleasant impression, but still an impression. But that huge finished painting did not leave me with even that unpleasant feeling. And yet its purpose was to annihilate *The Last Days of Pompeii*. A colossal, but alas, an unsuccessful undertaking.

August 5

At five o'clock in the evening I sailed into the city of Astrakhan on the most fragile fishing boat imaginable. It all took place so suddenly and so quickly that I can barely believe it happened. Now I recall my walk in the gully with Andrei Oberemenko as though it were a dream, and the very next day, i.e., on July 31, Irakly Alexandrovich [96] suddenly agreed to give me a pass direct to Petersburg. The very next day he did as he promised, and on the third, i.e., on August 2 at nine o'clock in the evening, I left Novopetrovsk fortress. After a fine three-day journey on the sea and up one of the many branches of the Volga, I arrived in Astrakhan.

August 6

On account of the Makaryev fair, not one of the many private steamboats is now in Astrakhan. The S. S. *Mercury* will not return to Astrakhan before August 15. It will then take on its cargo and will sail for Rybinsk on the 20, taking me to Nizhny. In the meantime I have willy-nilly become a sightseer in this deliberately filthy city.

August 7

Oh Astrakhan! Oh seaport city! Not a single eating-house where a person can dine half-way decently, to say nothing of getting a room in a hotel....

August 8

Even a God-forsaken town like Belebei (the most worthless little town in Orenburg Province) ought to have made a pleasant impression on a man who had vegetated seven years in the wilderness the way I have. But it didn't. That must mean that I haven't yet completely gone savage. That's good....

August 27

Quiet, moonlit nights, charming, poetic nights! The Volga, covered with a transparent mist, like an immense looking-glass softly reflects the pale beauty of the night

and the drowsy, precipitous bank, set with groups of dark trees. What delightful, sweetly soothing decoration! And all this charm, all this visible, mute harmony is filled with the soft and gentle sounds of a violin. For three nights running that miracle-worker, a freed serf, without remuneration lifts my soul to the Creator of eternal harmony with the captivating sounds of his cheap fiddle. He says that it isn't possible to keep a good instrument aboard ship, but he evokes magic sounds even from that not-so-good violin, especially in Chopin's mazurkas. I can never hear enough of those all-Slavic, heartfelt, deeply doleful songs. I thank you, serf Paganini. I thank you, my accidental and noble friend. From your poor violin issue the groans of a desecrated serf soul, and they merge into a single, drawn-out, deep groan of millions of serf souls. How soon will those penetrating wails reach Thy leaden ears, our just, pitiless and implacable God?

Under the influence of the mournful, wailing sounds of that poor freed serf, in the funereal silence of the night, the steamboat seems to be some sort of huge, hollowly roaring monster with an enormous open maw, ready to swallow the landlord-inquisitors. Great Fulton! And great Watt! Your young child, which grows not by the day but by the hour, will soon eat up the knouts, thrones and crowns, and will treat itself to the diplomats and landlords for dessert, like a schoolboy with a lollipop. That which the Encyclopaedists started in France, your brilliant, colossal child will bring to a successful end on the whole planet. My prophecy brooks of no doubt. I only pray the long-patient Lord to diminish His soulless patience a little bit. I pray Him to bend His leaden ear to the fullness of that heart-searing wail, the wail of His sincere, simple-hearted supplicants.

August 29

The banks of the Volga become steeper and more attractive day by day. I made an attempt to draw a sketch of one spot from the deck of the boat, but alas, that's impossible. The deck shakes and the contours of the bank

change rapidly. So I must say good-bye to the plan I made in Novopetrovsk to draw the banks of Mother Volga. Today, from midnight to sunrise, the boat was taking on a cargo of wood near Kamyshin, and I barely managed to make a light sketch of the Kamyshin pier and a stretch of the right bank of the Volga. The wood is being taken to Saratov, and that means that I won't be able to do anything before Saratov. Sixty versts above Kamyshin the ship's pilot pointed out Stenka Razin's[97] mound to me....

The Volga fishermen and the common people generally believe that Stenka Razin lives to this day in one of the gullies beside the Volga not far from his mound, and that (according to the pilot) last summer some seamen sailing from Kazan stopped at his mound, entered the gully and talked with Razin himself....

According to that same narrator, Razin was not a brigand, he only kept a guard-ship on the Volga and collected customs from ships and distributed the money to the needy. A Communist, it appears.

September 2

> *Fifteen years have wrought no change in us,*
> *I'm still the old Sashka, and you're still Taras.*

This morning at seven o'clock we happened to foregather in the captain's cabin and, one word leading to another, our talk on commonplace matters turned into a discussion of contemporary literature and poetry. After gossiping a bit, I suggested that A. A. Sapozhnikov read to us *The Dog's Feast* from Benediktov's translation of Barbier, which he did in a masterly fashion. After reading the translation, the original was read, and we unanimously agreed that the translation is superior to the original. Benediktov, the songster of curls and such-like things, does not translate Barbier, he recreates him. Incomprehensible! Can it be that with the death of that tremendous Obstacle[98] of ours, as Iskander[99] called him, the poets have returned to life, have been resuscitated? I

don't know any other cause. Apropos *The Dog's Feast*, our good, dear captain Vladimir Vassilyevich Kishkin brought out from his cherished briefcase Benediktov's *Entrance Forbidden* and read it to us, attentive listeners, with the ardour of a worshipper of our renovated poesy. Then he read the same author's *To the New Year, 1857.* I was amazed and couldn't believe my ears. Our dear captain read much more yet that was resilient, fresh and lively. But I concentrated all my attention and amazement on Benediktov. I barely listened to the others.

And so today, starting with commonplace chatter, we had a very satisfactory literary morning. It would be pleasant to have more such improvisations. At the end of that poetic gathering A. A. Sapozhnikov got inspired and wrote the above graceful and fraternally sincere two-line verse....

September 5

Volga's banks are changing more and more, taking on a monotonous and severe appearance. The plateaus on the right bank are covered with forests, mostly oak. At rare intervals, here and there glisten the white trunks of birches and the grey, lustreless trunks of the aspens. The leaves of the trees are noticeably turning yellow. The temperature of the air is growing cooler.... I will have to read a lot now. I've fallen behind the new literature terribly. How fine the "Provincial Sketches" are.... I revere Saltykov.[100] Oh Gogol,[101] our immortal Gogol! How overjoyed your noble soul would be to see such brilliant pupils around you. My true friends! Write, raise your voices on behalf of that poor, dirty, reviled rabble! For that profaned, mute muzhik!

September 6

At ten o'clock in the morning S. S. *Prince Pozharsky* cast anchor at the quay of the city of Samara. That rich traders' town is anything but picturesque from a distance. I went ashore to look at that prim young merchant woman from close up and to buy some warm footwear. I

met I. Yavlensky on the street and we set out to inspect the town together. It is a level, smooth, powdered and painted city, monotonous to the point of nausea. A living specimen of the reign of hard-to-forget Nicholas the Obstacle....

...On the floor in the captain's cabin I saw a rumpled page of my old acquaintance, the *Russky Invalid*, and I picked it up and out of boredom began to read a satirical column. It dealt with the Chinese insurgents and told of a speech made by Hong, the leader of the insurgents, before the storming of Nanking. His address began thus: "God is with us. What can the demons do against us? Those mandarins are cattle fatted for slaughter, fit only for sacrifice to our heavenly father, the supreme ruler, the only true god." I wish we could soon say the same for all to hear about the Russian boyars!

September 13

Kazan is a corner of Moscow.

I first heard that saying in 1847 at a postal station in Simbirsk Province, when I was being transported by government stage-coach to Orenburg. A well-nourished Simbirsk steppe dweller capped his description of the magnificence of Kazan to my escort with that catchy saying. This morning I sighted Kazan from afar and involuntarily recalled and spoke that saying which I had heard long ago. The boat had barely cast anchor when I jumped ashore, ensconced myself in a Tatar cart for twenty-five kopecks and went sightseeing. Kazan does resemble a corner of Moscow both from a distance, from close up and from inside: beginning with the churches and belfries and ending with the rolls and fancy breads—everywhere, at every step you see the influence of white-stone Moscow.... Stepping out of the cart on to the street I heard the hollow noise of the drums and saw a thick mob of people accompanying a criminal to execution. I turned into a lane in order to avoid that ghastly procession, and among those who were running to see the sight I saw a young girl with a street-organ over

her shoulders and a ragged boy with a tambourine in his hands. I felt sad, more than that, sick at heart, so I hired a Tatar cart again for twenty-five kopecks and returned to the steamboat....

September 17

Nothing went well for me yesterday. In the morning I began to paint a portrait of Y. A. Panchenko, the house doctor of A. Sapozhnikov. The call for breakfast came before I had had time to sketch the outline. After breakfast I went to the captain's upper room, firmly resolved to continue the portrait, when the town of Cheboksari began to come into sight from behind a hill. It is an insignificant, but a picturesque little town. At least half, if not more, of the buildings in it are churches. All are of ancient Moscow architecture. For whom and to what purpose were they built? For the Chuvash people? No, for the cause of the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox creed formed the central knot of the old domestic policy of Moscow. The hard-to-forget Obstacle in his folly tried to tighten that knot, which had become loosened, and overdid it. It now hangs by a thread....

September 20

...At eleven in the morning the S. S. *Prince Pozharsky* cast anchor opposite Nizhny Novgorod. The clouds dispersed and the sun pleasantly lit up the city and the beautiful countryside around it. I went ashore and climbed the hill without a cabby's help, past the seventeenth-century beauty—the St. George Church. I went to visit Bobrzycki, formerly a student at Kiev University, at the college; not finding him at home, I went to the Kremlin.[102] The new cathedral is a revolting building. It's an enormous square mortar with five short pestles. Could this be the work of Konstantin Ton? That's incredible. More probably it is a creation of the hard-to-forget Obstacle himself. Further. The offering of grateful posterity to Citizen Minin and Prince Pozharsky.[103] A petty offering which is a disgrace to an ungrateful posterity! It's a comfort that this cheap obelisk is already broken.

From the Kremlin I again went to Bobrzycki's and again didn't find him at home. I went from the college to find Sverchkov's house on Pokrovskaya street, where A. A. Sapozhnikov's quarters were. I found it. I had barely congratulated the master and lady of the house and my fellow-travellers generally on their temporary home, when Nikolai Alexandrovich Brylkin (head director of the *Mercury* steamship company) appeared and in secret informed first the master of the house and then me that he had a special order from the chief of police to let him know when I arrived in the city. Although I'm toughened to such things, the surprise set me aback. After a hasty breakfast I went to the steamboat, thanked my good friend, the captain, for his favours, took my passport and gave it together with my things to N. A. Brylkin. Calming down somewhat, I went to visit Bobrzycki a third time and found him at home, welcoming me with wide open arms. At eight o'clock in the evening I went to visit Brylkin, spent two hours in friendly conversation with him, took *Golos iz Rossiyi*, London edition, from him to read, and left for my temporary quarters at Pavel Abramovich Ovsyannikov's place.

September 21

My good new friends, Brylkin and Ovsyannikov, advised me to pretend I was ill so as to avoid a trip to Orenburg, very likely via convict transport, to secure the order of dismissal. I judged that it is not a sin to ward off baseness with hypocrisy, and pretended I was sick. I stayed abed until one o'clock, reading *Golos iz Rossiyi* and waiting for the doctor and the chief of police. But at one o'clock I gave it up and went to the Sapozhnikovs. After dinner I accompanied my good fellow-travellers to the post station and parted with them. They left for Moscow by post chaise. When will I see you again, charming people? I asked Komarovsky and Yavlensky to kiss my old friend M. S. Shchepkin for me in Moscow, and I begged Sapozhnikov in Petersburg to kiss my saintly patroness, the Countess Nastasia Ivanovna Tolstoy. There goes

Moscow! There goes Petersburg! The theatre, the Academy, the Hermitage, the delightful, friendly embraces of my fellow-countrymen, my friends Lazarevsky and Gulak-Artemovsky![104] Curses on you, my commanders, my unpunished torturers! It is vile! It is inhuman! It is disgustingly vile!

At seven in the evening I visited Brylkin. I found Ovsyannikov and Kishkin at his place and in frank, friendly talk drowned out the wails of the heart which had been wounded so unexpectedly, so vilely and so basely. If it weren't for those good people I would either have had to sit behind bars and wait for the order for my release, or simply to hurl myself into the embraces of the beautiful Volga. It seems to me that the latter would be easier.

September 22

Today, as yesterday, the weather is rotten: sleet and freezing cold. It's impossible to go outside. From behind the Kremlin wall the cathedral displays its ugly pestles with turniplike tops, and that's all I can view from my window. It's boring. I waited for the doctor and police chief in vain again as I had yesterday, and then went to Brylkin's for dinner. After dinner, as before, I lay and read Kostomarov's *Bogdan Khmelnitsky*.[105] A beautiful book, which fully presents that brilliant rebel to us. An educational, uplifting book! Historical literature has advanced powerfully during the past decade. It has cast light on details which had been covered with soot from the smoke of the incense that was so zealously burned before idols born to the purple.

September 30

While waiting for my uninvited guest, Mr. Police Chief, I proposed to my good landlord, Pavel Abramovich Ovsyannikov, that he sit for me. I finished the portrait quite successfully within two hours, while Mr. Lapa (that's his name) did not visit us....

October 1

Mud, fog, sleet and other atmospheric abominations, in consequence of which I asked Brylkin's brother-in-law, Mr. Gras, to sit for me. The sitting was interrupted before it was half-way through by the arrival of Mr. Lapa and Mr. Hartwig. The former is a dashing, amiable colonel of the Guards and Police Chief. The latter is not dashing, but still an amiable police doctor. Both are Poles or Lithuanians, and neither speaks Polish. Hartwig, thanks be, without any formality whatever found me ill with some long-lasting illness, while the obliging Mr. Lapa certified to the actuality of that supposed illness, and after mutual informalities we parted....

October 11

This morning I ventured out early to paint the Archangel Cathedral, got chilled to the bone and wouldn't have got anything done if I hadn't seen General Weimarn, the commander of the rifle regiment in training and, of course, the big chief of the barracks by the wall of which I had settled down to do my painting. I told him my trouble and he obligingly permitted me to set myself up at any one of the barracks windows, which I did with gratitude. After working awhile, I went to dine with N. K. Yakobi. For dessert he treated me to Iskander's pamphlet *Sacred Property*, the second London edition. What a heartfelt, sincere, humane message! May the light of truth and the strength of the true God be with you, our apostle, our lonely exile!

October 12

I have finished the drawing of the Archangel Cathedral which I began yesterday. It is original, beautiful and the oldest and best preserved building in Nizhni Novgorod. This cathedral was built at the time of the Grand Prince of Nizhny Novgorod Yuri Vsevolodovich in 1227.

October 16

Out of boredom I visited Varentsov today. Naturally, we talked about Kostomarov and he informed me (according to news he received from Moscow) that in Moscow a letter from Kostomarov to the tsar is being passed around among the youth. The letter is full of various truths and is generally more extensive and reasonable than Herzen's letter addressed to the same individual. Kostomarov's letter is supposed to have been written from London. If that is true, then it can truly be said that Nikolai Ivanovich is included in the list of our apostles abroad. Bless him, Lord, in that great endeavour!

After leaving Varentsov, I visited a new acquaintance, Pyotr Petrovich Golikhovsky, a pleasant, amiable person. He is here in transit from Petersburg to Yekaterinburg.... Golikhovsky informed me, among other things, that a new Russian journal has been founded in Paris, under the name of *The Intermediary*, with Sazonov as editor. The main purpose of the journal is to serve as an intermediary between the London periodical publications of Iskander and the Russian government, and further, to expose the foulnesses of *The Bee, Le Nord* and governmental vileness in general. An excellent purpose. It's too bad that it's not housed in Brussels or Geneva. In Paris the recently crowned Cartouche will close down that new-born child of sacred truth in a friendly way....

After dinner at the Popovs, I visited Yakobi, where I got acquainted with a Simbirsk landowner Kindyakov, a relative of Timashov, the present chief of staff of the gendarme corps. Since Kindyakov is going to Petersburg, I asked him to find out from his relative whether my banishment would long yet continue, and whether I can ever hope to attain full freedom.

At Yakobi's I aslo met and reverentially got acquainted with Ivan Alexandrovich Annenkov, a Decembrist returning from Siberia. This grey, majestic, gentle exile does not exhibit even a shade of bitterness against his cruel judges, but even good-naturedly ridicules the crowned sergeant-major's favourites, Chernyshov and Levashov, the presi-

dents of the Supreme Court of that day. I venerate you, one of our first-called apostles!

We talked about Nikolai Turgenev, who has returned from exile, and of his book, we talked of many people and many things, and we said *au revoir* at one o'clock.

October 17

Today I received a letter from Lazarevsky and two letters from my dear, unfailing Zaleski. Lazarevsky writes that he saw Countess Nastasia Ivanovna and that they came to the conclusion that if I were forbidden entry to the capital, they would write Count Fyodor Petrovich to solicit such permission for me through Maria Nikolayevna,[106] president of the Academy of Arts, where I would attend classes with enthusiasm as I did in times past. My good and noble patrons and advisers!

Apart from his usual heartfelt and sincere prelude, Zaleski writes that he received my drawings in full and had already placed some of them in good hands and sent 150 rubles to me in care of Lazarevsky. My tireless friend! He also introduces me to a Lithuanian countrywoman of his who recently returned from Italy with an enormous number of works of fine arts. I find such phenomena charming even when I haven't seen them, and am sincerely grateful to my friend for this introduction via correspondence.

Why doesn't Kukharenko write me? Can it be that he didn't receive my portrait and my *Muscovite's Well?* That would be terribly annoying.

Having read those pleasant missives to the point of intoxication, in the evening Ovsyannikov and I repaired to the fiery Moldavian. An awesome, extraordinary woman! Well magnetised, we wished her a happy journey to her distasteful Yekaterinburg and parted, perhaps, forever. A wonderful woman! Can it be that the blood of the ancient Sabines remains so omnipotently and infinitely alive? It would seem so.

October 23

I met A. S. Schreiders at nine o'clock in the evening. He informed me that an official document about me has been received from the commander of the Orenburg Special Corps, addressed to the local military governor. In order to read that document we went to the governor's office, to Andrei Kirillovich Kadinsky, who is an excellent person. The document announces that I am prohibited from entering both capitals and that I'm under secret police surveillance. Some freedom! A dog on a chain. That means that it's not worth being grateful to you, Y (our) M (ajesty).

What am I to do now without my Academy? Without my beloved aquatint, of which I have dreamed so longingly and so long. What am I to do? Supplicate my sainted patroness, Countess Nastasia Ivanovna Tolstoy, again? I'm ashamed to bother her. I'll wait until tomorrow. I will ask the advice of my true friends, Ovsyannikov and Brylkin. They are good, sincere and intelligent. They will teach me what to undertake in this desperate situation.

October 24

Today we came to the following conclusion. I shall remain here for an indefinite period on account of my supposed illness, and in the meantime I'll write Count F. P. Tolstoy and beg his intercession on my account, that I be allowed to live in Petersburg at least for two years. During two years with God's help I'll manage to make the preliminary experiments in my beloved aquatint.

November 3

Today is Sunday, so like a respectable person I preened myself and went out with the intention of visiting my acquaintances. I first visited Mister Grand, an Englishman from head to toe. And it was at this Englishman's that I first saw Gogol's works, published by my friend P. Kulish. My friend botched it somewhat. The edition turned out rather uncouth, and the author's portrait is so bad that I

wonder how the illustrious Iordan allowed it to be signed with his famous name.

Also at Grand's I first saw Iskander's *Polar Star* for 1856, Volume II. The cover, i.e., the portraits of our first martyred apostles, had such a heavy, melancholy effect on me that even yet I can't shake off that gloomy impression. How fine it would be if there was a medal struck in memory of that infamous event. On one side the portraits of those martyrs with the inscription, "The first Russian heralds of liberty", and on the other side of the medal a portrait of the hard-to-forget Obstacle with the inscription, "Not the first Russian crowned hangman".

November 7

A few days ago, as I was passing through the Kremlin, I saw a large crowd of peasants with bared heads in front of the government's palace. It struck me as an extraordinary occurrence, but until today I had not been able to find out what it was about, and now Ovsyannikov has told me.

The peasants belonged to the landowner Demidov, that same scoundrel Demidov whom I knew as a cuirassier cadet in Gatchina in 1837 and who at that time refused to pay me for his fiancée's portrait, and who, having squandered everything, now lives in his village and loots the peasants. The meek peasants, instead of simply hanging their despoiler, came to the governor to seek justice, and the governor, being no fool, ordered them whipped because they had not sought justice in the proper order, i.e., beginning with the district police officer.

It would be interesting to know what will happen next.

November 8

Until noon today I painted portraits of the Yakobis, and in the evening went to visit Weimarn; he had a regimental celebration today, consequently, there was a carousal. Walking into the first room I became completely confused at the sight of (a mob of) military men. I haven't been meeting those honourable gentlemen for a long time

already, thank God. One of them in particular so reminded me of Captain Kosaryov with his fat calf's mug that I was on the verge of springing smartly to attention. I was brought out of that detestable state by the hospitable host himself, who invited me into the drawing-room; among other guests in the drawing-room I met Annenkov and did not part from him all evening long.

November 11

This is a great, solemn, joyful day for me. Today I received a letter from my patroness, Countess Tolstoy, a friendly letter, as though to a kinsman. For what does she favour me with such inexpressible happiness? And how will I repay her for that unexpected, blissful celebration? Your only recompense are tears of joy and sincere prayers, my saintly patroness.

She advises me to write to Count Fyodor Petrovich and ask him to intercede in obtaining permission for me to come to the capital. That was my original idea, but I was ashamed to bother the old man. Now I have firmly made up my mind to do it. She also asks me to pass on greetings to V. I. Dal from herself and a Mr. Zhadkovsky. I haven't seen Dal here, though I knew him previously, so now it will be embarrassing for me. Serves me right, too.

November 12

Having replied to my saintly patroness's letter, I dressed up and went to visit Dal. But I passed his apartment, for some unknown reason, and went to visit the aide-de-camp of the local military governor, Prince Vladimir Fyodorovich Golitsyn, a very amiable young man who was wounded at Sevastopol....

November 13

I wrote the soliciting letter to Count F. P. Tolstoy today and will mail it tomorrow. I beg him to ask the proper authorities for permission for me to live in Petersburg and attend the Academy classes. It seems to me that the letter came out well. Ovsyannikov says that I have the qualifications to assume a prominent place among scrib-

blers of petitions. We'll see whether we will reap the harvest we want from that clever composition.

I also wrote Mikhailo Semyonovich Shchepkin today. I beg him to arrange an appointment with me somewhere on a farm in Moscow's suburbs. How happy I would be to see that famous veteran actor.

November 15

I received a letter from my amiable Bronislaw, he complains that his father has fallen ill, and he recommends me a friend of his, Yelena Skirmond, an art lover, a dreamer and generally an eccentric woman. That's not good either. But still she's better than my new acquaintance, M. Varentsova, who also is an eccentric woman. Only she's gone not on poetry and the fine arts, but on the stable and the kennel. Perhaps that's a sort of poetry too.

November 16

I've finished the portrait of my desperate Amazon and have started on her dear offspring. He's a boy of five, terribly spoiled, a future follower of the hounds, gentleman of the emperor's bedchamber, and a rotten person generally.

November 17

I paid my visit to Dal, and it's good that I have finally made that visit. He received me very cordially, enquired about his Orenburg acquaintances, whom I hadn't seen since 1850, and in conclusion asked me to drop in on him as an old friend. I won't fail to avail myself of that amiable offer, especially since my Nizhny Novgorod acquaintances have gradually begun to pall.

December I

I have a letter from Shchepkin, in which he proposes that we meet in the village of Nikolskoye (his son's estate), or else, if I don't have the money to spare for the journey (for me 125 rubles were completely superfluous), he promises that he himself will come to me to Nizhny. How

happy he would make me and all his Nizhny Novgorod admirers. I will write him to come here and to give us a taste of the old days on the poor local stage....

December 2

Today I visited my inspired virtuoso Tatarinov and at his place saw something I had not dreamed of seeing in Nizhny. I saw there an actual, magnificent Gudin. Two such delightful surprises on a single day—what an enobling experience! What barbarians the Nizhny Novgorod people are: they know Tatarinov only as an official of a railway-building company. Nobody even heard of Gudin's painting or of Gudin himself, except old Ulibashev, with whom I got acquainted today at the theatre. He's a well-known biographer and critic of Beethoven, and the most constant attendant of the local theatre.

December 13

I have received letters from Shchepkin and from Lazarevsky. My old friend writes that he'll come to me to sing carols during the holidays. Good, sincere friend! He plans to donate several performances to the Nizhny Novgorod theatre lovers. What a grand holiday gift!

Lazarevsky writes among other things that he received 175 rubles for me through Lev Zhemchuzhnikov with the stipulation that the giver's name not be divulged to me. How generous is this anonymous contribution! How will I repay you, my good, generous fellow-countrymen, for that sincere contribution? With a free, heartfelt song, a song of gratitude and prayer!

Right off today I'm starting to work on *The Satrap and the Dervish*, and if God helps me to finish it successfully, I will dedicate it to my upright, generous and noble countrymen. I want to write the *Satrap* in the form of an epic poem. That form is wholly new to me. I don't know how I'll manage it.

December 15

I received a letter from Fyodor Lazarevsky via Dal. He writes that he will be passing through Nizhny again on his way somewhere, and he asks me not to go to Balakhna. I won't go. Let it go hang!

December 16

In the evening I visited Dal to deliver him respects from Lazarevsky....

December 21

Today I received a letter from Shchepkin. He leaves Moscow today, and day after tomorrow I will embrace my old, sincere friend. How I rejoice in that candid friendship! God doesn't send many of us such complete happiness, and there are very few people indeed who have reached seventy years of age and preserved such poetic purity of heart as the patriarch actor Shchepkin!

Today I also received a letter from my saintly patroness, the Countess Nastasia Ivanovna Tolstoy. She writes that the letter which I addressed to Count Fyodor Petrovich will be delivered to Maria Nikolayevna during the holidays. And she writes me N. O. Osipov's address. My God! Will I soon see my Academy? Will I soon embrace my saintly patroness?...

December 24

A holiday above all holidays and a celebration beyond all celebrations! Mikhailo Semyonovich Shchepkin arrived at three o'clock in the night.

December 29

Mikhailo Semyonovich Shchepkin departed at twelve o'clock midnight. Ovsyannikov, Brylkin, Oleinikov and I saw my great friend off to the first station and returned home at three o'clock sharp. Six days, six full days of joyful celebration! How will I repay you, my old, my inseparable friend? How will I recompense you for that happiness? For those tears of joy? With my love! But I

have loved you long, and you are loved by all that know you. So with what? I have nothing to offer except prayers for you, the most sincere prayers.

January 1, 1858

We celebrated the New Year in a friendly and gay manner with Brylkin's family.

However gaily we celebrated the New Year, when I came home I became bored. After a little while, I went to visit Madame Gilde's charming family, but boredom overcame me there as well. From the shrine of Priapus I went to early service; that which worse yet—the sextons had hang-overs and sang so atrociously that I closed my ears with my fingers and got out of the church....

January 7

Returning to his homeland from exile (on the shores of the Syr-Darya), Krulikevich accidentally learned that I was in Nizhny and today paid me a visit. Among various uninteresting news from the steppes, he related a piece of news that was disgustingly interesting. The illegitimate son of the rotten satrap Perovsky killed his batman with his own hand, for which he was only reduced to the ranks; but the weakling couldn't stand even that most merciful punishment and he soon died or else poisoned himself. That's the proper end for him too. Like mother, like son. That cowardly tiger cub's mother, the wife of a certain mangy Baron Saltz and the bought w(....) of the corrupt satrap Perovsky, one day while getting ready to go to Mass for some reason became angry with her maid and whacked her on the head with a flat-iron. They buried the maid and the almighty satrap ended the matter there. Oh Nicholas, Nicholas! What evil handy men you had. In your own style.

January 22

Yakov Lazarevsky visited me on his way from Petersburg to service in Vyatka. He was in Little Russia recently. He told me about many fresh abominations in my native land, including the distressing Yekaterinoslav uprising in

1856, and about his neighbour and kinsman Byelozersky. That philanthropic landowner has so stripped his peasants that they composed a song about him, ending like this:

Don't you know, our Bilozer
Has a grey old mare,
Many a house in the village
Now is standing bare.
Don't you know, our Bilozer
Has a kerchief red,
May he suffer from ill-fortune,
Curses on his head.

What naive, innocent revenge!

February 25

At seven o'clock in the morning I received a letter from Lazarevsky. He writes that I have been granted permission to come and live in Petersburg. I couldn't wish for a better congratulation on my birthday.

At three o'clock I gave a dinner to N. Brylkin, P. Brylkin, Gras, Lapa, Kudlai, Kadinsky, Freilich, Klimovsky, Vladimirov, Popov and Tovbich. There was noise, gaiety and refinement at the dinner table because the company was of one kidney, simple and with a high degree of nobility. When the champagne was poured I made a speech: first of all, I thanked my guests for the honour they showed me, and in conclusion I said that I wouldn't bear God a grudge if I could meet such fine people everywhere as those present here, and that I would always keep their memory fresh in my heart....

March 1

The local governor has received a document from the minister of home affairs to the effect that I am permitted to live in Petersburg, but still under police supervision. That's the work of that old reprobate Japanese Adlerberg.

March 2

I received a letter from Countess Tolstoy. She writes that at last her heartfelt wish has been realised and that

she is impatient to greet me at her place. A good, noble creature! How will I recompense you for the good which your have done (for me)?...

March 4

While waiting for Ovsyannikov and a police permit for Peter(sburg), I began to rewrite *The Witch* for publication. I found much that was wordy and unpolished. The work, thank God, will shorten the long days of waiting.

March 5

I sent a letter to Countess Tolstoy. I wrote her that I will leave Nizhny Novgorod on the 7th at nine o'clock in the evening. Will it be so? That will depend on Ovsyannikov, not on me. That's silly.

I am continuing to work on *The Witch.*

March 6

I went to work on my *Witch* too zealously, so much so, that I finished it today, although there was a lot of work, and it seems that I finished well. I have copied and slightly amended *The Lily* and *The Water-Nymph.* How will my fellow-countrymen greet my prison muse?...

March 7

From one o'clock in the afternoon until one o'clock at night I was bidding my Nizhny Novgorod friends farewell. I finished the parting at M. A. Dorokhova's with supper and a toast to the health of my saintly patroness Countess Tolstoy.

March 10

I left Nizhny at three o'clock in the afternoon on March 8 on a sleigh and arrived in Vladimir at night on the 9th in a cart....

At the postal station in Vladimir I met A. I. Butakov, under whose command I sailed the Aral Sea during two summers—in 1848 and 1849. We had not seen each other since then. Now he's going to Orenburg with his wife, and later to the shores of Syr-Darya....

I arrived in Moscow at eleven o'clock in the morning. I rented a room at a silver ruble a day in a magnificent hotel and had great trouble in getting tea because it was so late....

March 11

At seven in the morning I went to search for my friend Shchepkin. I found him at old Pimen's at Shchepotyeva's house and have taken up quarters there, evidently for quite a while, because my eye has become swollen and red, and several groups of pimples have appeared on my forehead....

March 15

Two doctors visited me yesterday, but today there have been none. I'm better, thank God, and perhaps soon I won't have any need of them at all....

Mikhailo Semyonovich is nursing me as though I was a capricious sick child. He's the best of people! He asked a semi-countrywoman of mine, a Mrs. Grekov, to visit me with a notebook of Little Russian songs. She has a lovely, fresh, strong voice, but she does not do our songs at all well, especially the women's songs. She sang jerkily, harshly, without catching the national expressiveness. Will I soon hear you, my native, heartfelt song?

Pyotr Mikhailovich, my friend's eldest son, gave me two photographic portraits of our apostle Alexander Ivanovich Herzen.

March 18

I have finished rewriting or straining my poetry for 1847. It's too bad I've nobody with whom to read it over intelligently. Mikhailo Semyonovich is no judge in this case. He gets carried away too much. Maximovich simply reveres my verse. Bodyansky too. I'll have to wait for Kulish. Although he is harsh, he sometimes tells the truth; but you mustn't tell him the truth if you want to keep on good terms with him....

March 19

At ten o'clock in the morning Mikhailo Semyonovich and I left the house and in spite of the water and mud under our feet, we walked through at least a quarter of Moscow. I hadn't seen the Kremlin since 1845. The new barracks-like palace has made it much uglier, but it is still uniquely beautiful. The Cathedral of Our Saviour in general and the main cupola in particular are ugly. An extremely ungainly enormous building. It looks like a fat merchant wife in a golden head-dress who has stopped to show off amid the white-stone buildings....

March 22

Today is the most joyful day of all. Today I saw a person whom I never expected to see during my present stay in Moscow. That person is Sergei Timofeyevich Aksakov.[107] What beautiful, noble aged features! He is not well and does not see anybody. Mikhailo Semyonovich and I today went to pay our respects to his family. He learned of our presence in his home and asked us to his room despite doctor's orders. Our meeting was only for the duration of several minutes. But those several minutes made me happy all day long and will remain forever among my brightest memories....

March 25

Our esteemed M. A. Maximovich gave a dinner for me, to which he invited, among others, his comrades of yore, Pogodin and Sheviryov. Pogodin isn't as old as I had imagined him to be. Sheviryov is older, but despite his decorous grey physiognomy, he doesn't command respect. The oldster is cloyingly sweet. At the end of the dinner the amphitryon recited some verses he himself had written in my honour. And after the dinner our most amiable hostess sang several Little Russian songs, and then the delighted guests went their ways, while I visited Sergei Timofeyevich Aksakov, intending to bid him farewell. He was asleep, so I didn't have the happiness of kissing his beautiful grey head. I stayed at the Aksakovs until nine o'clock and listened with delight to my native

songs, sung by Nadezhda Sergeyevna. The whole Aksakov family are sincerely and heartily sympathetic to Little Russia, her songs and her poetry generally. At nine o'clock I went to Koshelyov's, accompanied by Ivan and Konstantin Aksakov, and there I met and became acquainted with Khomyakov and the aged Decembrist Prince Volkonsky. He described some episodes from his 30-years exile briefly and without any gall, and added in conclusion that those of his comrades who were kept in solitary confinement, all died, whereas those who languished several men together, including himself, survived their ordeal.

March 26

At nine in the morning I parted with Mikhailo Semyonovich Shchepkin and his family. He left for Yaroslavl, while I gathered up my meagre belongings and went to the railway station, and at two o'clock I left hospitable Moscow, bottled up in a coach. What had pleased me most about Moscow was that among enlightened Muscovites I had met with the warmest cordiality towards myself personally and sincere fondness of my poetry. Especially in the family of Aksakov.

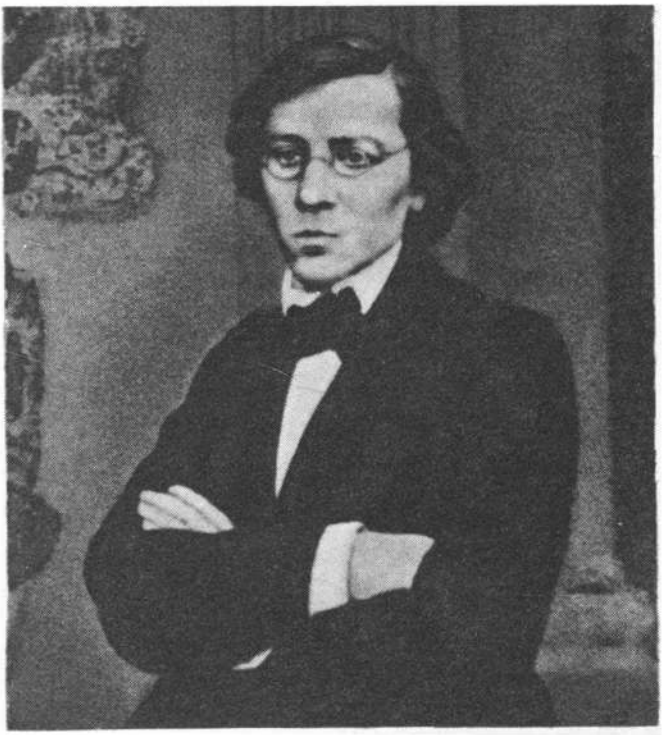
March 27

At eight in the evening the thundering locomotive whistled and halted at Petersburg. At nine o'clock I was already in the apartment of my most sincere friend, M. M. Lazarevsky.

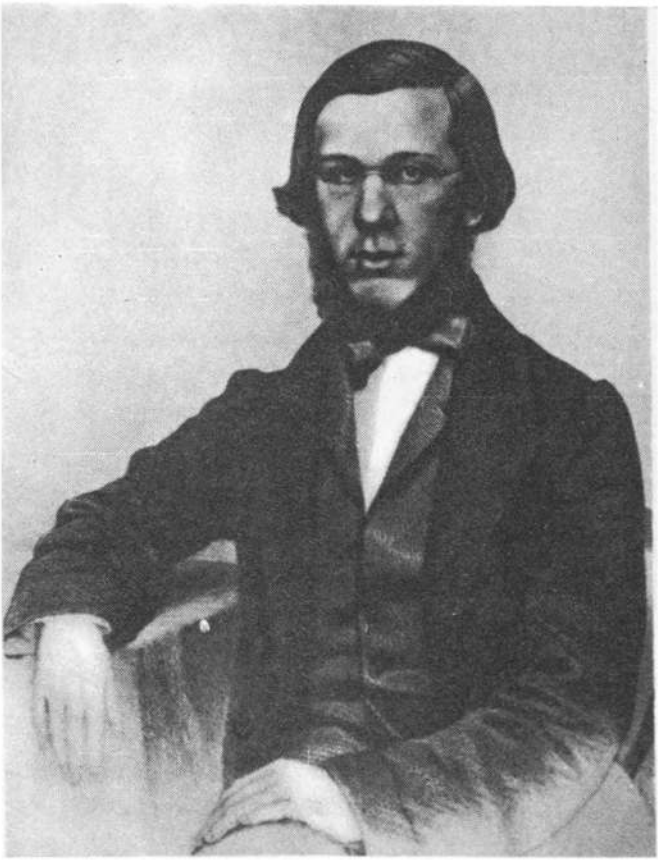
March 28

I ran about half the city on foot in the snow and sleet with practically no purpose. I dropped into Kley's hotel and there found Grigory Galagan, who had just come from Moscow. He delivered a letter from Maximovich to me with his verses, which he had recited at the dinner on March 25, a note for the receipt of the *Russkaya Beseda*, and my *Heretic*, i.e., *Jan Hus*, which I had deemed irretrievably lost, but which turned up in Moscow. At three I returned home and embraced my bosom friend,

77. Taras Shevchenko. Photograph by I. V. Gudovsky. 1859

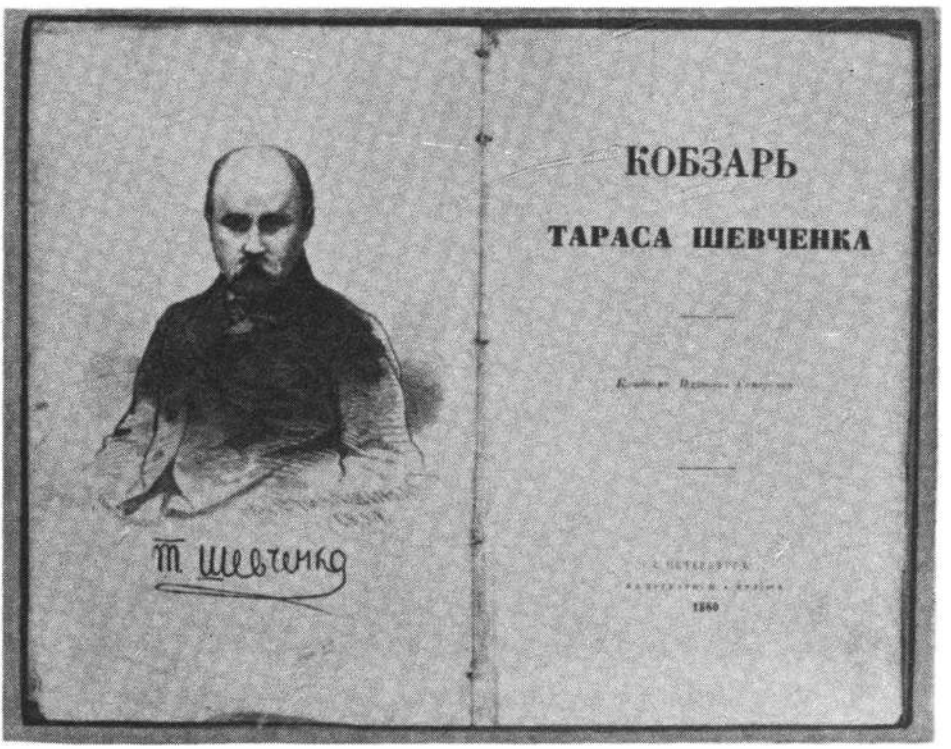


78. Nikolai Chernyshevsky. Photograph. 1859

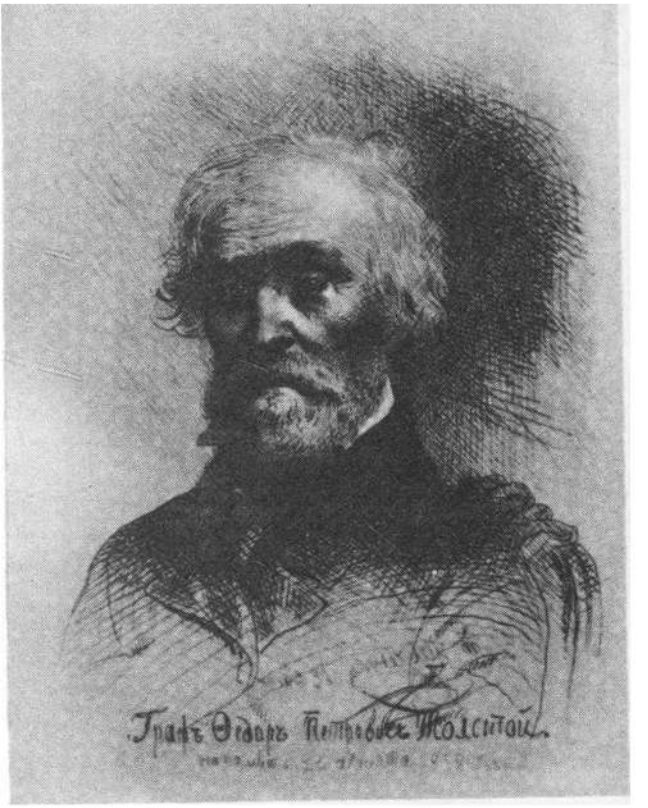


79. Portrait of N. A. Dobrolyubov. Engraving from a photograph. 1858

80. Photographic portrait of I. S. Turgenev. 1858-1860



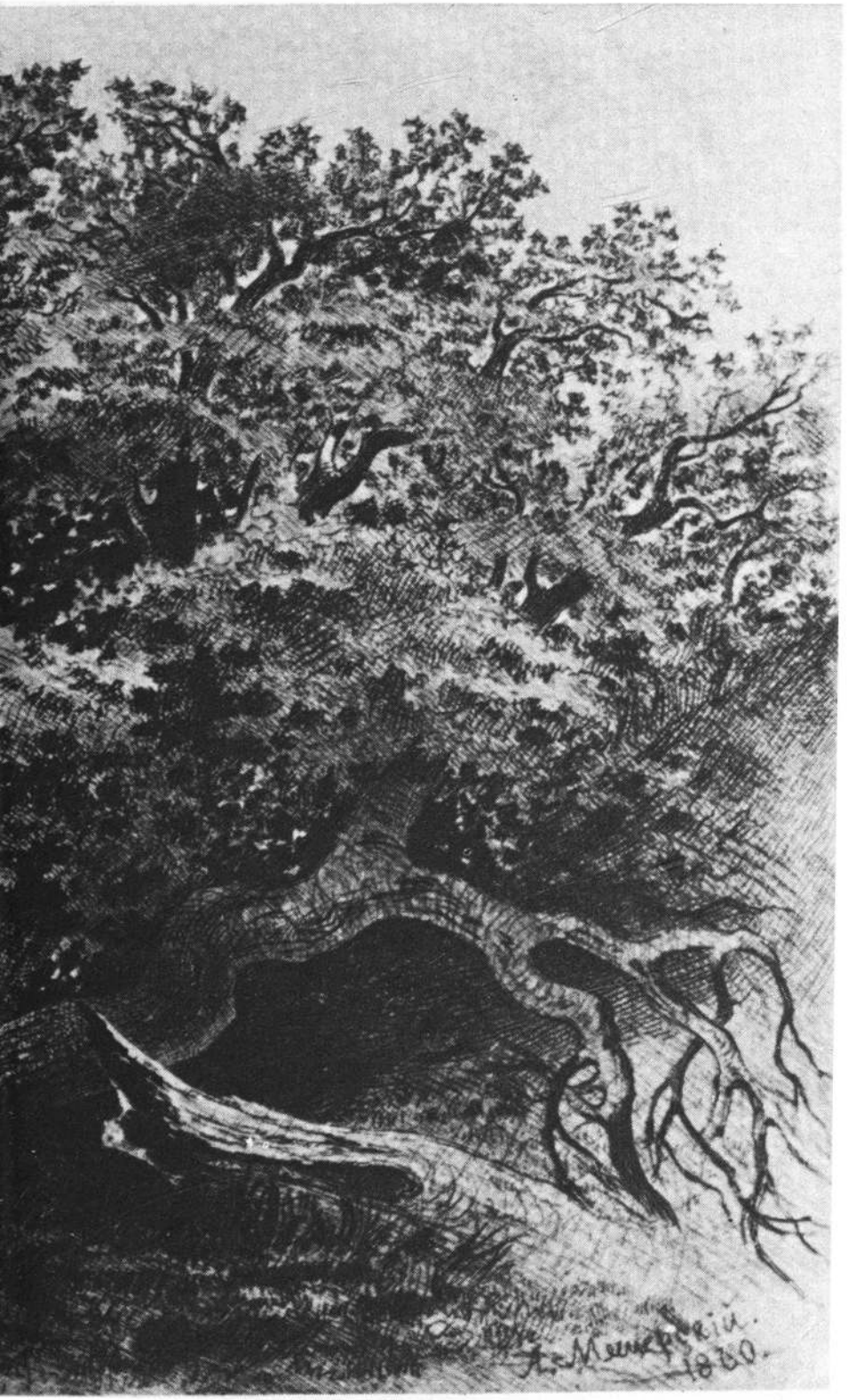
81. Taras Shevchenko. *Kobzar.* Title page. St. Petersburg, 1860



82. Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of F. P. Tolstoy. Etching. 1860

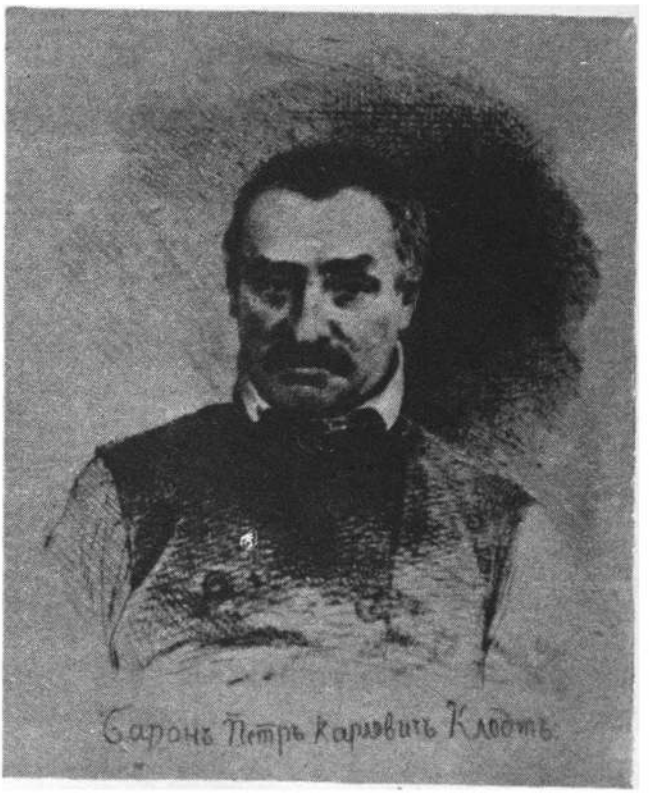
83. The certificate awarding Taras Shevchenko the title of Academician in engraving. 1860

84. Taras Shevchenko. Self-Portrait. Etching. 1860



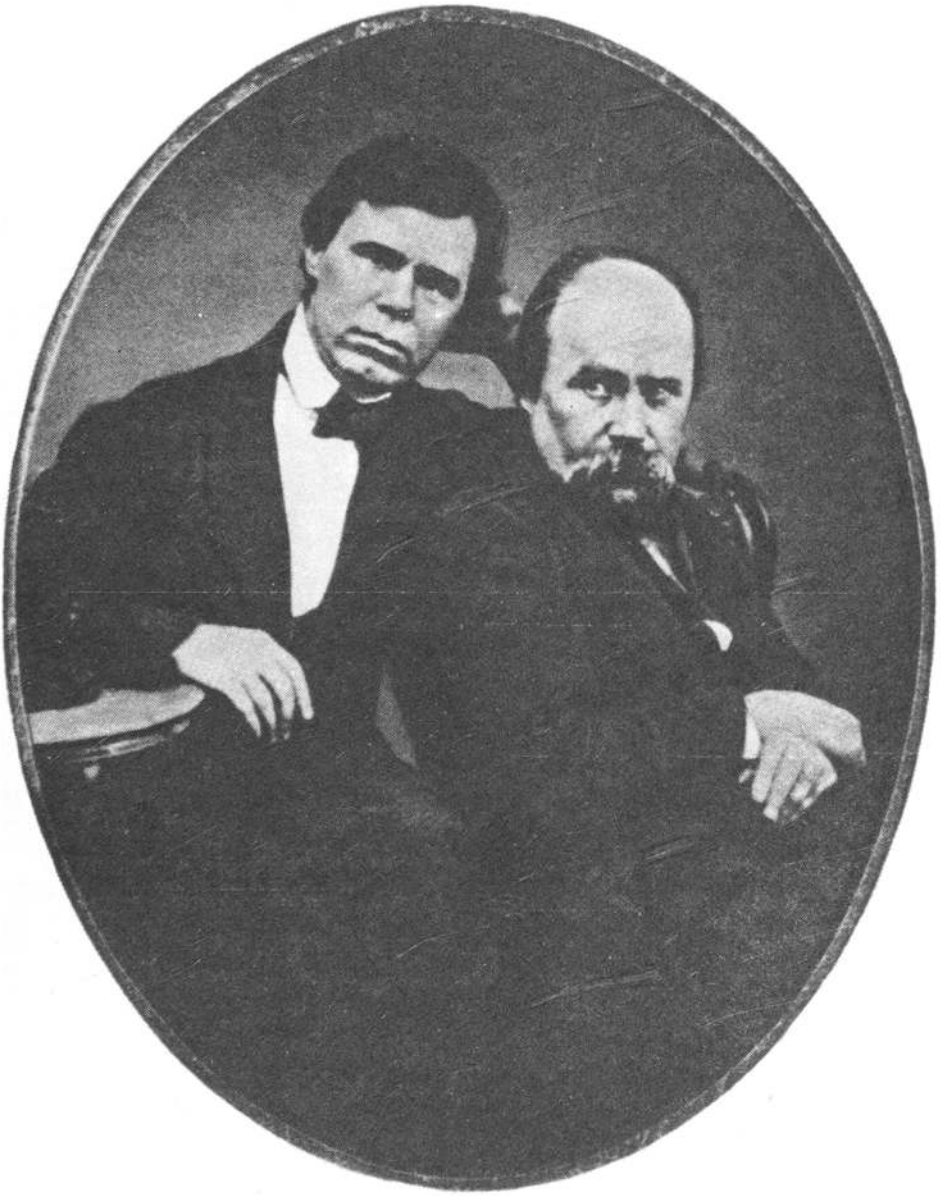
ras Shevchenko. "The Oak from the Painting of A. I. Meshchersky"
Etching. 1860

Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of F. A. Bruni.
Etching. 1860



Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of P. K. Klodt.
Etching. 1861

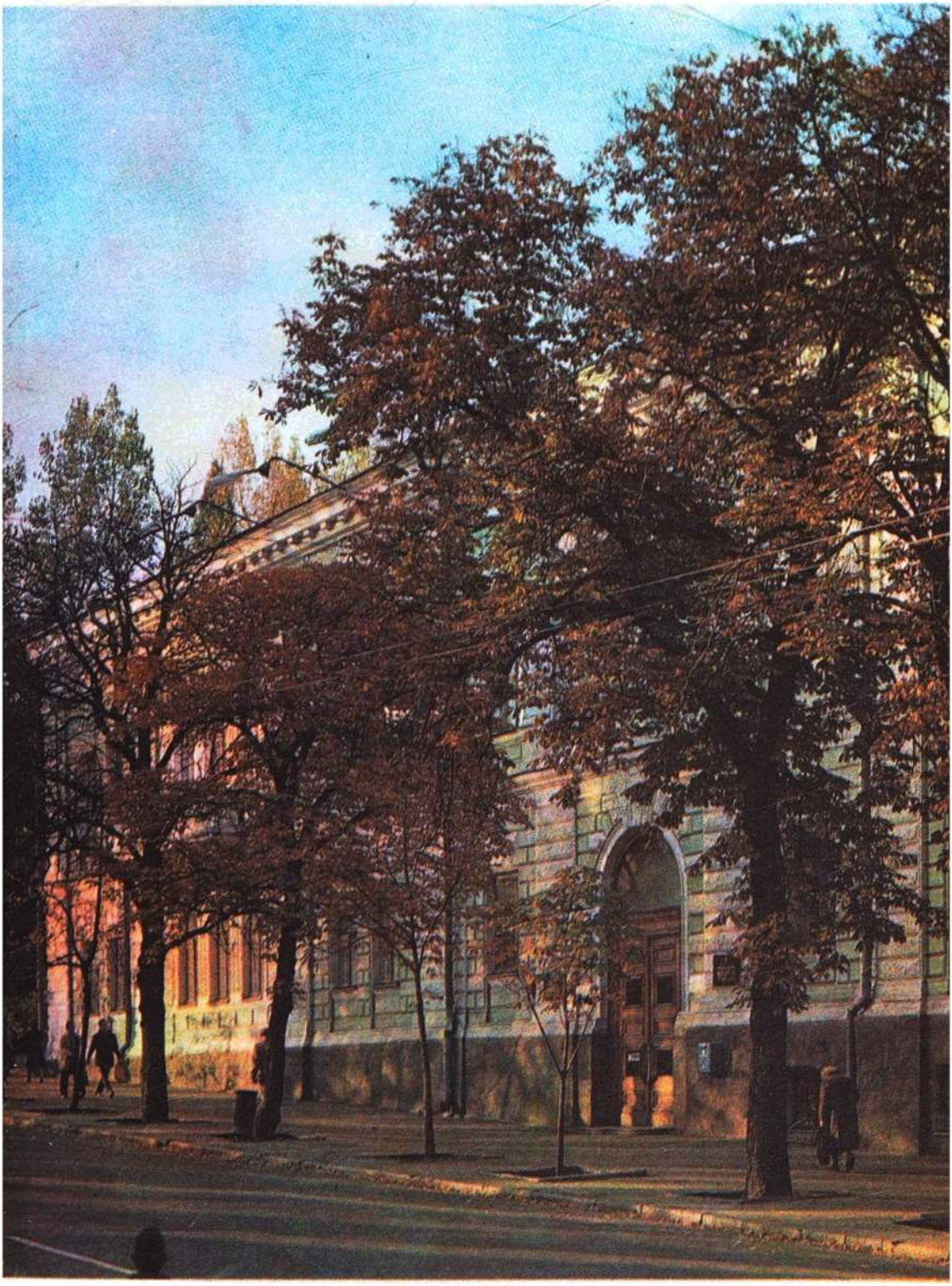
Taras Shevchenko. Portrait of Likera Polusmakova. Black chalk. 1860



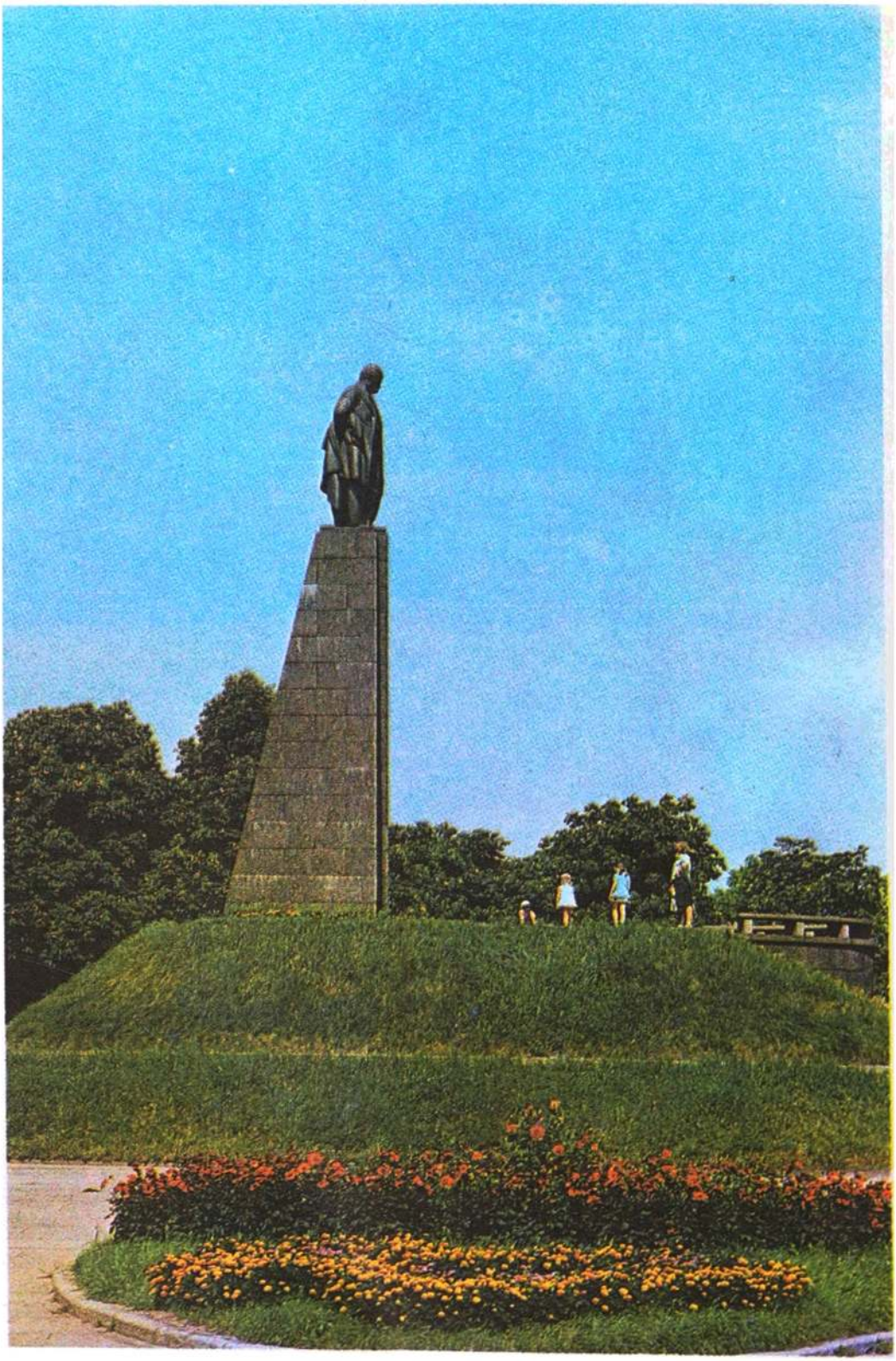
Taras Shevchenko and G. M. Chestakhovsky. Photograph.
1860 or 1861

The Shevchenko House-Museum in Kiev. Photograph. 1978

The artist's workroom at the Academy of Arts preserved as a memorial to Taras Shevchenko in Leningrad



The Taras Shevchenko Museum in Shevchenko Boulevard, Kiev. Photograph. 1975



The grave of Taras Shevchenko in Kanev, Cherkassy Region.
Photograph. 1964

Semyon Artemovsky. Half an hour later I was already at home in his house. We recalled a good many things and talked a lot, but there was still more that we did not have time to recall or talk about. Two hours flashed by faster than one minute. I parted from my dear Semyon, and at six o'clock in the evening together with Lazarevsky went to visit Countess Tolstoy.

I never received a more hearty and joyful welcome from anyone than from my saintly patroness and Count Fyodor Petrovich. It was more heartfelt than any family welcome. I wanted to tell her much, but didn't tell her anything. Another time. We sanctified our sacred joyous meeting with a bottle of champagne and parted at eight o'clock.

We spent the evening at the home of V. M. Byelozersky, my fellow-prisoner and cell neighbour in 1847. At his place I met my fellow-exiles in Orenburg—Sierakowski, Staniewicz and Zeligowski (Sowa). A happy, joyful meeting. We parted after cordial talk and dear native songs.

March 29

At ten o'clock in the morning I went like a petitioner to the office head of the city chief of police, my fellow-countryman I. N. Mokritsky. He received me semi-officially, semi-familiarly. Old acquaintance was relegated to second place. In conclusion he advised me to shave off my beard so as not to make an unpleasant impression on his patron Count Shuvalov, to whom I was to show myself as to my main warder....

April 4

Kamenetsky informed me that all my writings, except *The Heretic*, have been copied by Kulish. It will be necessary to make a selection and set about getting them published. But how should I approach the censorship?...

April 8

...In the evening I visited my fellow-prisoner Kroniewicz, and at his place, along with many Poles, I also met Russians, including two notables: Count Tolstoy, the

author of the soldiers' Sevastopol song, and General Khrulyov, the defender of Sevastopol.

The latter notable seemed subdued.

April 11

I commissioned Kamenetsky to make representations to the censorship committee about permission to publish the *Kobzar* and *Haidamaki* under the general title of *Poetry by T. Sh.* What will come out of it?...

April 15

In accordance with Countess Nastasia Ivanovna's wish, I presented myself to the chief of the gendarmes, Prince Dolgorukov. I listened to an appropriate but polite admonition, and that ended the audience.

I spent the evening at the place of my fellow-countryman Trofim Tupitsya, where I met Gromeko, the author of the article titled "About the Police and Bribery", and got acquainted with old Persidsky, a Decembrist.

April 17

N. D. Starov sent M. Lazarevsky a written copy of the address he delivered in my honour at a dinner given by Countess Tolstoy. As an item that I hold precious, I am entering it in my journal:

"A benedictory address to Taras Shevchenko.

"Shevchenko's misfortune has come to an end, and with that one of the most outrageous injustices has been wiped out. We will not infringe on the modesty of those, whose participation helped achieve that good end and has won the gratitude of all who sympathise with the blessings of virtue.... We say that we are delighted to see Shevchenko, who, amid the most terrible and killing circumstances, enclosed in the gloomy walls of the filthy barracks, did not weaken in spirit, did not give way to despair, but retained his love for his difficult fate because it is a noble one. Here we have a great model for all our artists and poets, and that alone deserves making him immortal!...

"Allow me to raise a toast of gratitude to Shevchenko who by his own sufferings has upheld the sacred belief that no circumstances have the power to crush the truly moral nature of man!..."

April 12, 1858 *N. Starov*

V. M. Byelozersky introduced me to Professor Kavelin. An attractive and likeable character.

The same Byelozersky introduced me to the three Zhemchuzhnikov brothers. Charming brothers!

In the evening I heard the opera *Life for the Tsar* at the Circus Theatre. A brilliant work! Immortal Glinka![108] Petrov is as fine as ever in the role of Susanin, and Leonova is fine in the role of Vanya, but a long shot from Petrova, whom I heard in 1845.

Translated
by John Weir

DRAMATIC WORKS

NAZAR STODOLYA

THE CHARACTERS

KHOMA KICHATY, Cossack *sotnik*
GALYA, his daughter
STYOKHA, his young housekeeper
NAZAR STODOLYA, his friend
GHNATT KARIY, another of his friends
KATERINA, mistress of the house where the dance takes place
A blind minstrel, Jewish musicians, young Cossacks and maids, matchmakers.
The action takes place in the XVIIth century, in a Cossack township near Chigirin, on the night of Christmas Eve.

ACT ONE

(Evening. A room sumptuously decorated with carpets and hangings of velvet. To one side, a table covered with a rich rug. Round it, benches upholstered in velvet and trimmed with gold braid. On the table are flasks of wine, goblets and platters of food. Wax candles are alight. Styokha is setting the table.)

STYOKHA (*stepping away from the table*): Well, now, that's all, I think, I don't believe there's aught I forgot.... Let me see.... There's the fish, beef, mutton, pork, sausage, the cherry and plum cordials, the mead, the Hungarian wine—yes, that's all.... I wish the guests were here, though. What can be keeping them? Only Grey Whiskers could have thought of such a thing—to invite matchmakers,

and these sent by another old fool like himself,—on Christmas Eve, when all good folk gather only to sing carols together! We'll see what comes of it. Cold metal cannot be bent. If he hadn't made such a secret of it but asked me to help him a fortnight ago, the cat would've been in the bag by now. But he only mentioned it today, and many's the kind and flattering words he used, saying as how good and kind I was, and clever too, and vowing to do this and that and the other for me, and everything else besides!... Well, we've yet to see whether our calf will eat up the wolf, as the saying goes.... (*Pause.*) And not a word did he breathe to his daughter as to who it is he would have her wed. Does he think we women are nanny goats to be driven any which way at will?... "Persuade her!" he says. Humph! As if it was as easy as all that!.. Not that a wretched little cornet is anything much! While the colonel, God preserve him, though well on in years, is at least a gentleman. And it's that as will make her lose her head.... Anyone else could never manage it, but whatever it is I set out to do, I do! It isn't hard for a maid to addle another, especially such a one as my young mistress. Ah, well!... Never can tell if the hare can be snared, but there's no harm in trying! And if I should succeed, what fun I'll have! As for Galya, she'll have her little cry and, once that's over, be all the better for it. And Nazar, too, I'm thinking, will have reason to thank me.

(Galya comes in through the side door.)

STYOKHA: Well, what think you? A nice looking table, now, isn't it?

GALYA: What are you up to, Styokha? Is anyone coming to-night?

STYOKHA: Yes indeed, and you'll never guess who.
GALYA: Well, then, you tell me.
STYOKHA: Have you no suspicion at all?
GALYA: Is it someone from Chigirin?
STYOKHA: Right the first time, my lass, but who, think you?
GALYA: The elders?
STYOKHA: No, not the elders.
GALYA: Strange... Could it be—but no, not on Christmas Eve! Father started to tell me the other day—
STYOKHA: He started to tell you, but never did. And I know what I know, but that's as far as I'll go.
GALYA (*embracing her*): Styokha, love, don't torment me. Tell me.
STYOKHA: What will I get if I do?
GALYA: Whatever you like. Another pair of earrings or a ring....
STYOKHA: I don't need anything. Just let me wear your coat to-night, when I go to the dance.
GALYA: All right, only mind that Father doesn't see.
STYOKHA: Of course not! Do you think me such a fool as that? Now listen. (*In a half-whisper.*) It's the matchmakers are coming.
GALYA (*beside herself with joy*): Nazar! Nazar's sending them!
STYOKHA: You'll see who.
GALYA: Is it not Nazar, then, Styokha? You mustn't frighten me.
STYOKHA: I never meant to. It's just my way of putting things.
GALYA: No! I feel you know something and don't want to say.
STYOKHA (*coyly*): Now, now! How would I, a mere housekeeper, know aught of my masters' affairs?
GALYA: Why should you make fun of me? I swear to Heaven, you'll only make me cry. I'll tell Father on you.

STYOKHA: And what will you tell him, pray?

GALYA: That you frightened me. And I won't let you wear my coat, either. There—and you thought I'd be so obliging!

STYOKHA: My, what a scary soul you are! Believing my every word.

GALYA: All right, then, out with it! Is it Nazar that's sending the matchmakers?

STYOKHA: Who else? It couldn't be old Molochai the Colonel, now, could it!

GALYA: That old thing! Makes me puke, he does. If I so much as see him stepping over the threshold, out I go! I can't understand what makes the Cossacks obey him. All the loathsome creature finds to talk about is cheese dumplings and home brew.

STYOKHA: And won't that do?

GALYA: Certainly not! And him a Cossack, and a Colonel to boot. Take Nazar, now—how different he is! It's the wars he talks about, and the marches, and Nalivaiko, and Ostranitsa and the blue sea, and the Tatars, and the land of the Turks.... It frightens me to hear about such things, and it enchants me too. I could listen for ever.

STYOKHA: You'll be a'looking at him and a'listening a good while yet. It might pall in time.

GALYA: Never, as God is my witness! I could look at and listen to him every day till the day I die, and never have enough. Have you ever loved anyone dearly, Styokha? Have you ever put your arms round your beloved and held him close? Has your heart ever thrilled, have your hands ever trembled at his touch? Have you ever felt his lips on yours? How pleasing it must be, how agreeable! (*Sings and dances in delight.*)

Hop-skip! Hop-skip!
Help me, gods above!
With a brave young Cossack
I am deep in love.

Hop-skip! Hop-skip!
In my heart what bliss!
'Twas a brave young Cossack
In the street I kissed.

Hop-skip! Hop-skip!
Mother, do not scold.
Let me marry, mother,
My young Cossack bold.

STYOKHA: Well done! Who did you learn that from?
GALYA: Why, from you. Don't you remember how you danced in the street? Some few days ago it was, when Father was out.
STYOKHA: I do not! What a thing to think up!

(A knock at the door.)

GALYA (*hurriedly*): Oh, oh, someone's coming! (*Runs away.*)
STYOKHA: Who's there?
KHOMA (*behind the door*): It's me! What are you waiting for? Open the door!

(Styokha opens the door. Khoma comes in, brushing the snow from his clothes.)

KHOMA: Haven't been and gone, have they?... The snowstorm's something fierce.
STYOKHA: Who's been and gone?
KHOMA: What a question! The people I was expecting, who else!
STYOKHA: What people? Oh, you mean the colonel's—
KHOMA: T-s-s!... Who else would I mean?
STYOKHA: No one's been here.
KHOMA: Learn to put a bridle on your tongue, strumpet!... Father Danilo, the Lord be thanked, took kindly to it, when I told him they were coming to-night.[109] So don't forget to send him some of our cherry cordial. Only mind, take the bottle we started and later added some spirits to. Let him drink to his heart's content. Now, what can be keeping

them? Frightened of the storm, maybe. But the wind seems to be dying down.

STYOKHA: Frightened of the storm? Not they! They'd come if it snowed sparrows, I'll wager. And who wouldn't for the sake of a comely lass like my young mistress!

KHOMA: You're right, and I'll not deny it.

STYOKHA: Sure, and why would anyone! He's an old duffer, and my mistress—

KHOMA: Old indeed! It's an old hag as says so.

STYOKHA: Dear me! How you do take on! It wasn't you I meant.

KHOMA: What of that! You meant my ... my Colonel, didn't you?

STYOKHA: Ha! And Galya—have you talked to her? What does she say?

KHOMA: What should she say? She'll do as she's told. She's young and foolish, and it's up to you to put some sense into her. Explain to her that love and such like are trifles and not worth a tinker's dam. You know it's so yourself well enough!

STYOKHA: What if I do! I don't know which end to start from with her. Enamoured of Nazar she is and as lovesick as they come. Why, only today she says to me, she says: "Pray to the Lord, Styokha, that it's Nazar I'll marry, for then you shall have half my fortune!"

KHOMA: And you believed her?

STYOKHA: Why shouldn't I, and her so generous!

KHOMA: What a ninny you are! Now, what if it's I, myself, as will turn over my whole fortune to you? What say you to that? (*Draws her to him.*) Aye, it's silly you are, lass, not to know on which side your bread is buttered.

STYOKHA: I can't help it if I'm silly like you say, can I!

KHOMA: Do as I tell you, and all I have will be yours, hear?

STYOKHA: I want none of it, for I'm happy enough without. But you mustn't forget about me

when they make a big lord of you. It's that fond I am of you and suffer so, while you—(*Pretends to be sad and woebegone.*)

KHOMA: There you go again, as full of tears as a widow at a wake. I gave you my word, didn't I, and I won't go back on it.

STYOKHA: A man will promise anything when he's hard pressed.

KHOMA: Enough of this chatter! Go to Galya and talk with her in the way you women have, for if things don't turn out as I'd have them, you and I will part company too before another day is up.

STYOKHA: A lord will promise you a sheepskin, and his word's enough to keep you warm. But it's a sin I'll be taking on myself, all the same.

KHOMA: A sin? Nonsense!

STYOKHA: Swear that you'll marry me, and, as Heaven is my witness, it'll all be as you want it! But not without my help. It'll come to nothing without my help.

KHOMA: Very well, here's my word on it.

STYOKHA: Your faithful word?

KHOMA: Aye.

STYOKHA: It's me you'll marry, is that what you promise?

KHOMA: Better than a bur you are for clinging to a man! It's all I can do to put up with your whims!

STYOKHA: Whims? This is no whim.

KHOMA: Oh, very well, very well! Now listen. We must be sly if she's not to learn who sent the matchmakers. Else will it all end before it's started.

STYOKHA: It's not me has to be told how to go about it. Such a string of tales I'll spin for my young mistress as would put a minstrel to shame! A man that's well on in years, I'll say to her, is better than a young man in all ways. A young man—and there's no denying it—a

young man is good for nothing and that jealous he'll wear a woman out with his suspicions, while an old man will make a quiet, patient, obedient husband.

KHOMA: True, true! You have good sense in that head of yours, lass!... Go to Galya now and have a good long talk with her.

STYOKHA: And may I be a'going to the dance afterwards? I'm all done here. Be a good soul and let me go this once, I won't be asking you again.

KHOMA: It's dances you think of and little else besides. All Katerina's doing, I'll be bound.

STYOKHA: And has that old trollop been telling you tales, then? What harm is there in it if I dance with the Cossacks? I don't say a word, do I, when you go off gallivanting with the village matrons!

KHOMA: Get along with you now.... Just tell Galya I want her. And yourself take out the towels for the ceremony.

STYOKHA: I've done that and everything else too.

(Exit Styokha.)

KHOMA: Now, if that isn't taking up with the devil, what is! (*Glances over his shoulder.*) But like it or not, there's no way out. In an affair of this kind it's either the devil or a woman you've got to turn to. (*A pause.*) A plague on the wench! She's all tricks and wiles, and if I don't watch my step it's a dunce's cap I'll be wearing for the rest of my life. But no! Just let her help me get the Colonel for a son-in-law, and as to what happens then, well, we'll see what we shall see!... A common village lass, and what airs she puts on! (*A long pause.*) Just you wait, my dear! Plot and scheme all you want, and it will all go up in smoke. A man has only to cast in his line, and the fish will take the bait. To become a colonel's father-in-law is no joke. Once a man

attains that much, the rest is up to him! I may yet be boasting a colonel's mace in Cherkassi or even in Chigirin itself!... And it's honour I'll have, and fame, yes, and money too. It's the money that matters most, though. People can fair smell it on you, and they'll dance attendance on you even if you never own to having it. Ha-ha-ha! A mere *sotnik*, am I!... While still I was with the Brotherhood [110] my heart told me I'd be a great lord some day. It happened I used to say one thing and do another, and there were those as called me two-faced because of it.... Fools! Fools! Is a man to jump into the flames just because he has mentioned fire? Is he to marry a woman just because he has praised her looks? Rubbish! Keep away from fire if you don't want to get burnt, I always say. And if you're a man of sense and not a simpleton, then it's not a pair of dark eyes you'll wed, but a rich farm with a mill attached.

(Enter Galya.)

GALYA (*gaily*): Good evening, Father! What has been keeping you so long? Did you want me?

KHOMA: I did. (*Looks her over.*) Why so few ribbons in your plait, child? Ah, well, I suppose they'll do for the present. Now listen, for I've something important to say to you. Know you that we are expecting matchmakers to-night?

GALYA: To-night? On Christmas Eve?

KHOMA: What of that? Father Danilo, and it's thankful we must be to him, gave me leave to invite them. So don't you say no when they ask you if you're willing to marry.

GALYA: Why should I do that? It isn't as if my suitor were in his dotage. Oh, the fibs Styokha has been telling me!... It's enough to make you laugh.

KHOMA: And what has she been telling you, pray?

GALYA: That it's old he is, and bent, and—No, no, I won't tell you on account of it all being such dreadful nonsense. I doubt she knew what she was saying!

KHOMA: Come, come, surely you know an old man is better than a young one?

GALYA: *She* says so!

KHOMA: And don't you agree?

GALYA: Certainly not! An old man and a young one—why, they can't be compared!

KHOMA: So you think a young man is better?

GALYA: Indeed I do!

KHOMA: You haven't really thought about it or you'd know how much wiser than you your father is. What has a young man to boast of?—A pair of dark moustaches, at most! And don't think you'll be satisfied feasting your eyes on them all your life. There'll come a time when you'll start thinking of other things. You'll want to be honoured and respected and looked up to, and that's something none save a colonel's wife—I'm only giving you an example like—can expect. Believe me, daughter, if it's only a petty officer you marry, with nothing to his name but a handsome moustache, no one will look at you twice.

GALYA: Why should I want anyone but my husband to look at me!

KHOMA: What silly prattle! Think you your husband won't tire of looking at you alone all his life long? You're not the only woman on God's earth, and there's some as are comelier! He'll stop loving you soon enough.

GALYA: Nazar? Never in this life!

KHOMA: I'm not saying that's how it will be, I was just trying to make it clear to you. We men are all of a piece.

GALYA: Not Nazar! He's different, he'll love me always.

KHOMA: Has he pledged his troth, then?

GALYA: He has.

KHOMA: And you believed him?

GALYA: I needed no vow of his to believe him.

KHOMA: Silly lass! Do you not know that he who makes big promises rarely lives up to them? Come to your senses and listen to your father. You're lucky I'm not one to go back on my word. But think what you would do if I deprived you of your dowry. Not that he wouldn't marry you without—there are enough fools in the world, and he's one of them.... But still, just think, lass—what would you do?

GALYA: Why, what others have done. I'd go to work and earn my keep.

KHOMA: And what is better, think you—to work or to have others work for you?

GALYA: It depends.

KHOMA: The trouble is you're only a silly still. There's many things I could have explained to you had we had the time. But we haven't: the matchmakers might be here any moment now. Have you the towels ready?

GALYA (*happily*): Oh, yes! I'm so happy, my heart is fit to burst! Are you happy too, Father?

KHOMA: Indeed I am.... Go now and don't forget to tell the servants to keep out the carollers.

GALYA: To keep them out? Oh, no! Would you go against our customs? The carollers only come once in the year.

KHOMA: And matchmakers only come once in a lifetime.

GALYA: There's truth in that. We don't want the carollers in the way, do we! I'll run and tell them to lock the gate.

(Exit Galya.)

KHOMA (*paces the floor; he is deep in thought*): Things are in a fair way, I'm thinking. She'll never doubt it was Nazar sent the matchmakers and, seeing as there'll be no one to let the cat out of the bag, the matchmakers not being ones to do it, foolishly give her consent. The wedding can be

put off for a week, and in a week's time a man, let alone a maid, can be persuaded to stop straining at the lead.... If only the devil don't bring along that young whippersnapper or the whole thing will fizzle out!... (*With authority.*) Come to think of it, what is Galya to him? She's my child, she belongs to me, therefore I can do with her as I please. I'm her parent and, as such, her ruler.... Bother Nazar! This business is not one to mull over for long. If only I can bring it off! For nothing is truer than that God helps those who help themselves. I must be careful and not try to stick a square peg in a round hole, as the saying goes.

GALYA (*running in, beside herself with joy*): They've come! They've come!

KHOMA (*with a start*): Oh, how you did startle me! Go to your room and stay there till I call you.

GALYA: Why should I go to my room? I'll stay right here, no one will see me.

KHOMA: You can't do that: custom forbids it.

GALYA: Oh, very well, then. (*Goes out.*)

(Khoma sits down at the table. He has put on an air of great importance. Three knocks come at the door. Enter two matchmakers, bearing a loaf of bread. They bow low before Khoma and place the loaf on the table.)

MATCHMAKERS: Good evening, noble sir!

KHOMA: Good evening to you, good people! (*Makes a sign to one of the matchmakers, who bows and listens respectfully as Khoma whispers something in his ear.*) Pray, be seated, for it's welcome you are in this house. Whence do you hail—from far or near? Be you hunters, perchance? Be you fishermen? Be you Cossacks free?

MATCHMAKER (*coughing in his fist*): 'Tis from western lands that we hail, 'tis from eastern lands that we come; we are hunters bold to many and we're Cossacks true to some.... One day, when the first

snow fell, I said to my friend: "Let the wind roar, let the wind blow, we are hunters we are and a'hunting we'll go." So off we set with the dawn's first light, but of game we found not a sign or sight. All of a sudden whom should we meet upon the way but a Prince. It was coming on toward the end of day, and the Prince when he saw us had this to say: "Hear me, O hunters, brave men that you are! Hear me and, if you would be my friends, help me! In the forest deep, in a lonely glade, I once came across a Marten Maid. And ever since I haven't been able to eat or sleep for thinking how to have her for my very own. Snare the Marten Maid for me, and you shall have whatever your hearts desire, be it thrice-three townships or thrice-nine lands, or princely treasures without weight or measure." Well, that was all we needed to hear, so off we set to seek the Marten Maid. We went east and west, we searched high and low, not a realm was there where we did not go. Searched we high and low, but 'twas all in vain, for we found her not and went back again. And we said to the Prince, we said: "Is the Marten Maid indeed so lovely that she hasn't her match in all the world? Mayhap we can find thee another maid, no less beautiful?" But no, he would have none of it. "To many a land and a realm have I been, but never so lovely a maid have I seen," said he to us. So off we set again to seek the Marten Maid, and it is to this village, whose name we do not know, that our search led us. Now, this morning the snow fell again,

and the tracks were plain to see. So we rose at dawn and followed them here, and to us, dear sir, it is clear as clear that the Marten Maid is hid in your house, though 'tis quiet and still she keeps as a mouse. And that is our whole story. So be kind, noble sir, and merciful, too, for whatever's to be, depends solely on you. Are the Prince and the Marten Maid to wed or is he to lie on a lonely bed? If you'd have him hope, make us welcome, pray; if you'd have him weep, send us on our way.

KHOMA (*pretending to be angry*): A plague on you, hunters, 'tis misfortune you bring into this house! Galya! You hear, Galya? Come and tell me how I am to deal with these two brave men!

(Galya appears. She walks out onto the centre of the room and stands there with downcast eyes, fingering her apron.)

KHOMA: See what you've done, my good men and true, you've brought shame on us, that you have! So here is what I shall do. I'll take your offering of holy bread and I'll thank you for your kind words, but to keep you from taunting me and saying that I'm hiding the Marten Maid I'll tie and bind you fast. The time has come for me to have my say, and have it I will. Come, daughter, stop frowning and bring me something to bind the two brave hunters with. You must have embroidered towels put away for just such a purpose. But if 'tis little you've learned and little you know, if you haven't been taught to spin or to sew, then bring us a string or a piece of rope and bind them with that.

(Galya goes to her room and returns immediately, bearing two embroidered towels on a silver tray. These she places on top of the loaf of bread brought by the matchmakers. She then comes up to her father,

bows low, kisses his hand, and, picking up the tray with the towels, holds it up like an offering to each of the matchmakers in turn. The matchmakers take the towels and bow before Khoma.)

MATCHMAKER: Many thanks to you, O father of this maid, for teaching her to rise early when the skies are pearly and to do many good and useful things. And many thanks to you too, O maid, for having risen early when the skies were pearly and for having spun fine cloth and made fine gowns and put them away for your dowry.

(Galya takes the towels from the matchmakers. She drapes one of them over the first matchmaker's shoulder and the other over that of the second one. Then, with a shy glance at the door, she steps aside.)

KHOMA (*to Galya*): I know, I know! You are eager to bind the Prince too, child. Bide your time and we'll do it together on the morrow. The Prince must have taken fright if he hasn't shown up yet. But he'll not escape us, never you fear, we'll catch him soon enough.

MATCHMAKER: He'll come running when he hears you speak so.

KHOMA: That's as it may be, but we won't wait for him, for who knows how long he'll take! So pray be seated, and we'll eat and drink whatever's placed before us, and talk over the things as need to be talked over. And as for you, Galya, my child, you must be a good and a kind hostess to our guests, you must fill their cups with mead and with wine, speak to them sweetly and treat them to the best we have.

(The matchmakers seat themselves ceremoniously at the table. Galya takes a flask and goblet from her father's hands and offers them to the older of the two.)

MATCHMAKER (*declining to accept them*): We'll not drink till you yourself have taken a sip from this goblet, lass. For fearful are we lest

you mean to poison us for trying to take you away from your father. *(Bows.)*

(With a glance at her father, Galya shyly touches the goblet with her lips and passes it on to the matchmaker.)

MATCHMAKER (*lifting the goblet*): Good! Good! May the Lord send this lass and her intended good health and good cheer, and may they live long and happily and see their grandchildren married and their great-grandchildren brought into the world. May—

(The speech is interrupted by the sound of singing outside. The carollers have arrived. Everyone stops and listens. Khoma, vexed, twirls his moustaches. Galya glances happily at the window. As the singing continues, the first matchmaker says once and then again: "Fine singers our Cossacks!"

Carol

God sees the world perish,
To this fast attends he.
The Archangel Gabriel
To Nazareth sends he.
In the den glory rises,
The bells sound in greeting.
O Bethlehem, open
The bright gates of Eden!

KHOMA (*in a temper, to Galya*): Did I not tell you to keep them out? Forgot all about it, you have. Always up in the clouds!

(Enter Nazar and a group of young Cossacks.)

NAZAR: Good evening, good folk! May God bless you and help you with all your kind and worthy deeds.

(The other Cossacks repeat these words after him. Nazar has not removed his hat. He now pauses, thunderstruck, his gaze straying from Galya to the two matchmakers. All are silent.)

KHOMA (*confused*): Thank you.... Thank you.... It's welcome you are. Do be seated....

(The rest remain silent. Galya, smiling, glances shyly at Nazar.)

NAZAR: We'll sit if there be seats for us. We have come here uninvited and will go whence we came if we be in the way. (*Looks at the matchmakers.*) So that was why the Colonel sent me to Guliay-Polye with the deeds! (*Turns to Galya*) My, how merry we are! Fill the goblet and I'll drink your health. Don't be afraid, fill it full!...

(Galya, stunned, drops the tray and flask.)

KHOMA (*in a rage*): Who dares to taunt my daughter?
NAZAR: I, Nazar Stodolya! He to whom but yesterday you promised your daughter in marriage! He you have known from the day he saved you from a Haidamak's blade! He who will not let the Hetman himself make a fool of him!... Now do you know me?
KHOMA: Aye. (*Indifferently.*) And what of that?
GALYA: Was it not you that sent the matchmakers?
KHOMA: Silence! Leave us!
NAZAR (*stopping Galya with a gesture*): Wait, do not go! Has he tricked you too, then?
KHOMA: My daughter does as her father tells her.... She has been promised in marriage to the Colonel of Chigirin.
NAZAR (*scornfully*): Has she now? She was mine yesterday and is the Colonel's today. Whose will she be tomorrow, I wonder? Do you hear, Galya?
GALYA: Yes... Yes... I hear! (*Nazar has stretched out his arms and is just in time to catch her as she falls in a half-swoon.*) O Lord! Why am I not deaf?
MATCHMAKER: Look here, I—
NAZAR: Silence, you rascal! Silence, you traitor!
KHOMA: Give me back my daughter. *(Takes a few uncertain steps toward Nazar.)*
NAZAR: Back, Judas!
KHOMA (*terrified*): Prokhor! Ivan! Styokha! Come here, whoever is there! Turn him out before he kills me!
NAZAR: May you be slain by the hand of God, you who would sell your own child! *(To Galya.)* Galya,

dear love, knew you or knew you not who it was he meant to be your husband? Answer me, Galya!

GALYA (*recovering a little*): I swear to Heaven I knew nothing of this!

NAZAR *(to Khoma)*: You hear?

KHOMA: No! I'm deaf.

NAZAR (*to the people assembled in the room*): Hear me, good people, hear me if you be not deaf! Until today this man called me son and I called him father. Today, he refuses to listen to me, he says he is deaf. Would you call him truthful? Would you call him honest?

(All are silent)

GHNATT (*coming up to Nazar*): Leave him be, Nazar, don't waste words on him. A wretch like him isn't worthy of them *(Takes Nazar's arm.)*

NAZAR: Wait!... There must be some good in him, he called me son. (To Khoma.) Do I not speak true?

KHOMA: It is not for you to call me to account! I am Galya's father, not yours, and she shall wed whomsoever I tell her to wed.

NAZAR: What if she refuses?

KHOMA: I'll force her to obey me!

NAZAR: Can anyone be forced to hang or drown himself? Are you God that you can work miracles? Are you a demon that you have no pity for your own child? Do you want her heart to turn to stone? You too were young once, you too knew joy and sorrow. Did you not fly into a passion if any dared to mock you?

KHOMA: Go on, talk, wag your tongue!

NAZAR (*in a fury*): What—you add insult to injury?... I'll trample you to death like a toad, you liar! (*Clutches him by the throat.*)

GALYA (*seizing Nazar's hand*): What are you doing! Kill me instead!...

(Nazar releases Khoma.)

KHOMA (*running up to the matchmakers*): You saw him, he tried to strangle me!

(The matchmakers remain silent.)

GHNATT (*to Nazar*): We'll square accounts with him when the time comes. Let us leave this sale block!

NAZAR: Not for anything in the world!

GHNATT: Then bargain with him. Perhaps he'll let you have her cheap.

GALYA: Oh God, to be mocked at so!

KHOMA: Not mocked at—bargained for.

GHNATT: Enough, friend, let us be off. We have come too late.

NAZAR: No, it can't be! (*Comes up to Khoma.*) Forgive me, I was rash, I forgot myself. You are a good man. If you cannot forgive me, then kill me, only don't take Galya away from me, don't say she is not to be mine!... Look! (*Falls on his knees.*) I kneel to you, I who never kneeled to the Hetman. For the sake of your immortal soul if you have faith in God, for the sake of all the saints if you believe in but one of them, for the sake of your daughter if she is at all dear to you—look at me! Let the matchmakers take their loaf of bread and go whence they came. In the name of Christ our Saviour I implore you to spare your child, for there is no better lass in all the world. Take an axe and kill me, but spare her, do not cut her down in her youth and prime, she is not at fault!

(Khoma looks at his guests. He is trembling.)

GHNATT (*rushes up to Nazar*): Whom do you plead with? At whose feet do you lie? I cannot bear to look at you! Bowing to a devil! Why, he'll pour boiling tar down your throat! (*Makes to go.*)

NAZAR (*stopping him*): Wait!... Let me say but one word more.

GALYA (*throwing herself at her father's feet*): You promised my mother on her deathbed to marry me to Nazar! What are you doing? How have I angered you? Why would you destroy me? Am I not your own daughter?... (*Bursts out crying.*)

NAZAR: You are as stone, as metal! Fire alone can melt you. Well, you shall have fire! Only wait, and I shall bring down all of hell on your head! (To Galya.) My poor lass, you have no father, you have a hangman for a father! My dear little love, my poor little bird!... (Kisses her.) It's luckless you are, but am I not even more so! For where is the hand that would slay me? Goodbye, dear heart, goodbye. We'll see one another soon.

(Galya, speechless, falls onto Nazar's breast. Nazar kisses her. Khoma struggles to pull her out of his grasp, but Nazar pushes him away and kisses her again.)

NAZAR (*to the matchmakers*): Tell the Colonel what you have witnessed.... Tell him that his bride kissed another in your presence. (*Galya puts her arms round him and kisses him.*) There, there, you see?... Goodbye, dear heart, goodbye little dove! (*Kisses her.*) I know what I must do. I shall find justice.... Wait for me, I'll be back!...

(Galya swoons away. Nazar hurries out, covering his face with his hands. He is followed by Ghnatt and the other Cossacks. Khoma and the matchmakers rush to Galya's side.)

ACT TWO

(The interior of an ordinary peasant hut. It is pleasantly neat and clean. There are candles alight on the table. Katerina, the mistress of the house, is tidying up near the stove.)

KATERINA: O Lord! When I think of how it all was when I was a girl. At the first news of a dance in anyone's house, we'd all go running there so fast the palings creaked. And now... the cocks will soon be crowing for the third time, and the dance hasn't so

much as started yet. Of course, it's a holiday and all, and they're out singing carols, but still, it's high time to begin.... No, say what you will, the world has changed. Take the Zaporozhian Cossacks, now.... Why, they only call themselves Cossacks and are nothing like at all! Think they're a brave lot. Pah!... A far cry from the lads I used to know. I remember them come flying up from the Sich on horseback—your true eagles they were—and swooping down on us! And if one of them caught a girl round the waist, he'd lift her off the ground and carry her so.... Oh, dear, where has it all gone to?... (*Shakes her head sorrowfully, sings.*)

Stars and crescent met, stars and crescent met
O'er the shadowed plain.
For the dawn to come, for the golden dawn
Did I wait in vain.
Home I came and wept, home I came and wept
And forgot to pray.
On my bed 'thout sleep, on my lonely bed,
Open-eyed I lay.
Flowering cherry trees all about me rose,
O my dark-eyed love,
And you seemed to be there beside me close,
O my black-browed love!
It was dawn, it was, when I said, I did:
He is far away!
On the Danube shore is he galloping
On his winged bay.
Ah, my falcon bold! 'Twas for you I longed,
Aye, for you alone.
From the Danube Stream, from the Danube Stream
Rode the Cossacks home.
You were not with them, you were not with them,
All alone am I.
Stars and crescent meet, up above they meet,
And I weep and cry.

My own lot, my very own! It's as if the song was made up about me.... Where is my youth, where my young years.... Gone without a trace, as if borne away by a

tide. (*Pause.*) Why does no one come, forsooth! Oh, that Styokha! A mindless wench. Went to fetch the maids and is keeping company with the Cossacks instead, I'll be bound. It's the devil himself brought them together, her and Kichaty! It would be different were he a lad, but he's a man, and one well on in years, and should have known better than to hire a young lass for a housekeeper. Someone with sense in her head he needs, someone discreet and devoted, and a good housewife besides.... And all Styokha does is spin like a top.... I wonder, though, how he aims to fix up his daughter? A colonel's wife, no less, he would have her and feasting her eyes on her husband's bald pate, like as though it was the bright moon overhead! How long, does he think, she'll be at it? Ah, me! These old codgers! It's their place to sit warming their bones on the stove ledge and eating mush, but no, give them a wife, and a young wife, and nothing else will do! They must think they'll have it all their own way. Not likely! There's Nazar Stodolya—a brave lad! I know him, he'll beat a path through the Colonel's garden right enough.... The more fool he if he doesn't. As for myself, I can only say that— Someone's at the door.... Coming! Coming!... At last. (*Opens door.*)

(Enter Nazar and Ghnatt.)

KATERINA: Dear Lord in Heaven!... Where do you come from? What brings you here?

GHNATT: Do not ask, dear lady, do not ask. Asking too many questions is what ages a woman, and old age becomes you ill, I swear. Come, come, take the frown off your face!

KATERINA: Pray be seated.

GHNATT: Dear lady, do not be vexed. There's all sorts of words will fly off a man's tongue! Close your ears to some of them, and you'll be the better off for it. Holding a dance here to-night, are you?

KATERINA: Not for the likes of you, our dances! You've only come for a laugh.

GHNATT: We'll laugh right enough if the dance is a merry one.

KATERINA (*looking at Nazar*): There's some as will and some as won't.

GHNATT: That remains to be seen. Now, can't you find us some work for the teeth and a bit of the good stuff that a man pours down his throat to warm the cockles of his heart? The old miser, curse him, never thought to offer us supper. Well, why do you stand there with your mouth open, woman? Get a move on!

KATERINA: I won't be a minute. (*Moving away.*) Poor Nazar!...

(She takes a flask of wine and some food down from a shelf and places them on the table. Nazar, crestfallen, looks at Ghnatt.)

GHNATT (*to Katerina*): And now take a broom and go and dust the moon to make it shine brighter. See how dark it's turned outside! And while you're about it, Nazar and I will talk over a matter of concern to the two of us.

KATERINA: God be with you! Am I a witch to be dusting the moon?

GHNATT: No offence meant.... Just you close your ears to what we two will say here, understand?

KATERINA: Oh, I see, you want to talk private like. Very well, I'll go and see if I can find Styokha. (*Puts on her coat and goes out.*)

GHNATT (*looking after her*): She's gone.... Why do you stare at me as if you never saw me before?

NAZAR: The way I feel, I wouldn't know my own father.

GHNATT: Like a glass of vodka? A man, if he's wise, won't scorn one no matter where he is, be it in a rich or a poor man's house. (*Pours out a glass of vodka and holds it out to Nazar.*) Don't want it? That's your business. But a glass or two of Adam's tears, as the monk who was in charge of the monastery stores used to say,

can only do you good. Or have you forgot the rules of the Brotherhood?

NAZAR: Now, wait, better tell me why you brought me here.

GHNATT: In order to talk to you as one Cossack to another. Here's to Cossack wisdom and Cossack freedom! (*Downs his drink.*)

NAZAR: A lucky man you are!

GHNATT: You're luckier.

NAZAR: You don't know what it is like being in my shoes.... Come, let us be on our way, Ghnatt, I'm like to stifle here.

GHNATT: Wait, it's early yet. We'll watch the good folk making merry first, and then decide where to go.

NAZAR: I care not where, I'll go wherever you take me.

GHNATT: That's a woman's talk and not fit for a Cossack!

NAZAR: It's wretched I am, Ghnatt! You laugh, and my innards turn over. Is my sorrow something to laugh at?

GHNATT: It is, man, it is.

NAZAR: I thought you had a heart.

GHNATT: And I thought you were a true Cossack, a man, and you're no better than a woman. What is it as is making you lose your head? Is any woman, be she a Caesar's daughter even, is she, I say, worth a man's going mad on her account?

NAZAR: And why not?

GHNATT: Nonsense! Know you the price King Solomon set on a gold plough? When a man's in need, a piece of bread is worth more to him than a nugget of gold, he said. And I'll say this—that a glass of vodka is worth more to a Cossack than all the women in the world!

NAZAR: All you do is make game of me, Ghnatt, and what I need most now is a trusty friend.

GHNATT: I am just such a friend, Nazar, for I speak the truth to your face. But if it's lies you

would have, you're welcome to them.

NAZAR: Stop jesting and tell me plainly what you think I ought to do. Surely you've thought of something.

GHNATT: Look you now, have some vodka first, it'll help set you right without my help. (*Pours him out a glass.*) Have you forgot what the Latin bard, what's his name, said?... You know the one. I was birched till I steamed when the good father who headed the Brotherhood school found some of his verses hid in the leg of my boot. Well, this very wise bard said: "Never scorn a woman, but remember that nothing but vodka is worth a damn." (*Drinks.*)

NAZAR (*scornfully*): You wretch! A dumb animal is kinder than what you are. Ah, if only you could see in here! (*Points to his heart.*) But stay! Perhaps you are only jesting, only saying things for the sake of saying them.... My good friend, my faithful friend, don't torment me. Weep with me, and if you can't, then pretend to weep with me. My heart is nigh bursting with sorrow! Let the devils in hell laugh, it becomes them more, but you—you are a man.... (*Looks at him with affection.*)

GHNATT: I am that, but you are naught but a woman, for you grieve without reason. I said it once and I say it again!

NAZAR: You are made of stone!

GHNATT: You can think as you please, but I am more wretched than you, more wretched even than your dog. Your dog fawns on you, he loves you, and you reply to him in kind. As for me—I too, fool that I was, was once ready enough to give my heart to one of these vipers in women's clothing. I would seek her love, weep bitter tears and be willing to give up my life for her.... Shall I tell you what came of it each time it happened?

NAZAR: No, don't, I don't want to listen to you, there is no kindness in your heart!

GHNATT: There was once, but my heart has since become overgrown with moss like a rotting, good-for-nothing oak stump. The time will come when you too will have learnt your lesson. (*Kindly.*) Enough, enough! Do not mope, it will help you little. Friendship and love, a curse on them, are naught but foolish notions, they don't exist, and only fools and infants put faith in Latin verse.... Let us speak of more urgent things before those dark-eyed magpies swoop down on us. We'll drink a glassful and have a laugh with them and, believe me, you'll clean forget this foolishness. Well do I know it, it was sorrow that taught me.

NAZAR (*getting up from the table*): I too have learnt what sorrow is, but it has taught me nothing. And I refuse to listen to you, for you are more heartless than Satan himself. (*Makes to go.*)

GHNATT: Where are you off to?

NAZAR: Hades. I freeze in your presence. Hellfire alone can warm me.

GHNATT: Stop! Let me show you the way, you won't find it alone.

NAZAR: I will, never fear.

GHNATT (*trying to stop him*): Do you really mean what you say? Have you taken leave of your senses?

NAZAR: I will pocket no insult and listen to no foolish counsel. Let me go!

GHNATT: Found words at last, have you? Where are you going, you precious fool?

NAZAR (*flaming up*): Say no more or it'll be the end of you!

GHNATT (*not letting him go*): Or of you, but what next? Do you want us both to die?

NAZAR: I care not what happens to me. Let me go! I'm off to Chigirin to see the Colonel.

GHNATT: What for?

NAZAR: I'm going to kill him!

GHNATT: What if you don't succeed? Is it that you mean to try and persuade him to give up Galya?

NAZAR: Maybe.

GHNATT: On your way to pay the devil a visit, eh? Would you not rather embrace your slender-waisted Galya than the pot-bellied Colonel? Do not frown. Listen to me and do as I say, for you'll think of nothing sensible yourself.

NAZAR: Well?

GHNATT (*glancing round him*): Walls have ears, you know. (*In a half-whisper.*) We'll carry Galya off, that's what we'll do. What say you to that?

NAZAR (*after a pause, shakes Ghnatt's hand*): Forgive me.

GHNATT: Have you aught else to add?

NAZAR: You are a true friend.

GHNATT: We'll talk of that later. Do we carry out my plan? Yes or no?

NAZAR: Yes! Yes! Lead me, and I follow.

GHNATT: Then listen.... You'll not deny that that lass of yours ventured out into the garden on many an evening to see you?... Oh, not alone perhaps....

NAZAR: With Styokha.

GHNATT: It means she loves you, loves you truly.... Have you a gold coin on you?

NAZAR: I have two.

GHNATT: All the better. They'll serve to buy Styokha a pair of earrings, and you can keep the promise of a jeweled comb dangling before her. Women are notorious chatterbags.... Besides, the more she knows, the more she'll ask of you.

NAZAR: I'm ready to give up all I have. But where will I see her, Styokha, I mean?

GHNATT: She's coming here. Did you not hear Katerina grumbling, displeased with her for being late? Be sure to go about it all properly. I'll be

waiting with three stout horses by the tavern that's just off the old abandoned road.

NAZAR: Yes, I know where it is.

GHNATT: No one will pass it by day without crossing himself or dare to go near it at night. So there's not a better place for our purpose to be found anywhere. Only move quickly and see that nothing delays you:

NAZAR: What if she refuses—what then?

GHNATT: Who? Styokha or—

NAZAR: Either of them.

GHNATT: It all depends on you. If you know how to talk to them, neither will refuse. Styokha would go out carolling with the devil himself for a gold coin, and as for Galya, she'd follow you with nothing but her shift on to the ends of the earth. But as that is much too far, you need only take her to the Sich,[111] where the Hetman himself counts for no more than a simple shepherd. You're still a Zaporozhian, aren't you?

NAZAR: I am.

GHNATT: Then what else do you want? Who is your ataman?

NAZAR: Sokorina.

GHNATT: I've heard about him. A bold and daring man! He could drown the devil himself in the Dnieper.... Nay, in a dipper of water!... Just you cheer up and be a man. (*Loudly.*) Well, here's to the barmaid, a bonny lass! Come, brother mine, raise high your glass!

(They drink. Enter Katerina.)

KATERINA: Ah, me, I'm all spent!... A plague on Styokha! It was all I could do to find her.

GHNATT: Have you dusted the moon?

KATERINA: You can laugh, but the skies do seem brighter like.

GHNATT: Here's something for your labours. (*Hands her a glass of vodka.*)

KATERINA: Ready to drop I am!... No, not for me, thank you kindly.... Oh, well, if only to oblige you. (*Takes a sip. Ghnatt gestures to her to drink up. Grimacing and pretending to overcome a repugnance she does not feel, she drinks, then flings the few remaining drops at the ceiling.*) For foes to keep mum, for friends not to know. (*Gives him back the glass.*)

GHNATT (*offers a glass to Nazar who shakes his head in refusal*): If you won't, you won't. But all the same, it seems to me there is no sorrow so great that it can't be drowned in a glass of vodka. Drink one, and another, and a third, and you'll have the devil on the run! Do I speak true, Katerina?

KATERINA: It all depends. There's some as even a full bottle won't help.

GHNATT (*to Nazar*): You refuse, do you?

NAZAR: I do.

GHNATT: The more fool you. Your health! (*Drinks.*) You know how that song goes—without a wife a man is bored, without his liquor even more? Well, there's truth in those words. Drown your sorrow in vodka, say I! It's a wise man invented it. (*To Nazar.*) It sickens me to look at you. One more, and it'll do me. (*Refills his glass.*) Do you recall the time we ran away from the Brotherhood to join the Zaporozhians and met a dark-eyed lass on the way? You nearly traded your Cossack freedom for her dark eyes! Forgot all about it, have you? I haven't.... I never forget. And I can sometimes see into the future, too.

STYOKHA (*running in*): I swear by the Holy Virgin, it's fit to drop I am! I've been everywhere and seen everyone.... (*Looking round her.*) Heavens me, I didn't notice you at first.... Good evening! Never thought to see you here, either, I must say. But it's grateful I am that

you deigned to honour us by your presence. Don't you go judging us too severely, though. Our dances cannot compare with any you hold in Chigirin.

GHNATT: Now, now, lass, don't you speak so. Your dances are better than ours, and well you know it.

STYOKHA: There you go—making game of us!

KATERINA: Is anyone coming?

STYOKHA: Sure, and why not? Everyone is.

(Ghnatt takes Katerina's arm and leads her aside. Nazar leaves his seat and approaches Styokha.)

GHNATT (*to Katerina*): My head's aching nigh fit to burst. I think I'll go out and see what it's like without.... See here, what about the minstrel? Forgot to invite him, I'll be bound! And what's a dance without a minstrel? A dull affair. So run and get him, woman!

KATERINA: Have you invited Kirik, Styokha?

STYOKHA: Heavens me, I clean forgot! I'll go and do it now.

GHNATT: What, and lose yourself on the way again somewhere?... No, you go, Katerina.

KATERINA: Yes, I think I'd better.

(Exit Katerina and Ghnatt.)

NAZAR (*taking Styokha's arm*): I've something to ask of you, Styokha.

STYOKHA: And well I know what it is: to tell my young mistress to come out into the garden when the master goes to bed. But it's changed, things are now, and you know it.

NAZAR: What's to stop me from saying one little word to her? (*Hands her a gold coin.*) Here, take this. And you'll get a jeweled comb besides if I'm pleased with you.

STYOKHA (*taking the coin*): I'd like to please you, but it's no easy thing you ask of me. The old man might keep awake all night, I've known it to

happen. My poor mistress! And me a'weeping and a'begging him.... But no, he *would* have it his own way, the old devil.

NAZAR: So you'll do it?

STYOKHA: Yes, yes, I'll do it. Only—

NAZAR: Never you fear, no one ever has more than the measure of grief fate metes out to him. And if you like, you can join Galya and me and run away with us.

STYOKHA: Run away? Where?

NAZAR: To a place where life is free and easy and where you'll be your own mistress and not a servant in another's household.... Well, have you puzzled it out?

STYOKHA: Not wanting to trick me, are you? The rich think they can do anything they please to us poor folk.

GHNATT (*off stage*): Katerina! Look, Katerina! Who is that on the moon?

KATERINA (*off stage*): Don't you know? Two brothers, and one of them has run a pitchfork through the other.

GHNATT: Fancy that! I swear I never heard anything about it.

KATERINA: I'm chilled. I'll tell you the story when we get back into the house.

(All through this Nazar has been conversing with Styokha in low tones. She now gives him an affirmative nod and turns away just as Ghnatt and Katerina enter.)

STYOKHA: Can it be you never heard about it?

GHNATT: Perhaps I did, I don't remember.

STYOKHA: Well, then, listen. The Holy Week was just over, Easter had come round, and the good folk were still at morning service, when the older brother of the two went out to feed his oxen. He picked up a pitchfork to lift the hay, and, as ill luck would have it, ran it through his younger brother, just by accident, you understand. So the good Lord put them both up on the moon for all Christians

to see and be reminded that on so holy a day it's a sin for cattle to eat, let alone men, before the Easter cake has been hallowed.

KATERINA (*mockingly*): My, how cleverly she's told it!

GHNATT: The lass is a wonder—so fair and so quick of wits! (*Embraces Styokha.*)

STYOKHA (*pretending to be angry*): It's shameless they are, these city Cossacks! All they do is poke fun at us poor village girls. (*Ghnatt kisses her.*) Hey, hey, none of that! Let go of me or I'll scream!

(A group of young Cossacks and girls piles noisily into the hut.)

IN THE CROWD: Good for Styokha! Quick, she is! Never one to lose a chance. What will old Khoma Kichaty say?

STYOKHA (*freeing herself from Ghnatt's embrace*): Got nothing out of me, did you, not even a kiss!... Who's that yelling his head off about me being so quick and all? Ghnatt here was only joking, he meant no harm....

GHNATT (*to the Cossacks*): Well, lads, who's your leader? Have you brought the fiddlers?

VOICES: Aye, and a minstrel too.

GHNATT: And what of the food and the drink?

VOICES: Couldn't do without, could we!

GHNATT: You're brave lads and a match for any in Chigirin! (*To the girls.*) Which of you will dance with me?

VOICES: Step back, step back! Let the fiddlers through!

(Enter several Jewish musicians. They are preceded by the minstrel, a blind man with a *kobza*. The Cossacks and girls draw back to let them pass. There is a confused babble of voices. All through this, Nazar and Ghnatt are heard conversing together.)

GHNATT: Be more cheerful, they mustn't suspect anything. Styokha will know how to shake them off, but you and I had better be the first to go. I'll leave at once, and you bide here a while, just for appearances' sake. Don't you pay court to the lady too long, though. Come to the tavern without delay, I'll be there.

NAZAR: All right. Only you must not dally either.

GHNATT: I won't, never you fear. Look—friends of ours! What brings you here, Kuzma?

COSSACK: We came for the church service. And as for the dance, well, that's something a man can nose from afar.

GHNATT: Good lads!... What about you, fiddlers?

JEW: It was chance led us here, sir. There was nothing to be earned in Chigirin, so we thought Mr. Kichaty might want us, seeing as there is to be a wedding at his house.

GHNATT (*aside*): Quick to perk up their ears, this lot! (*Loudly.*) Well, let's hear you play our Zaporozhian dance! (*To the Cossacks.*) Come, lads, strike out with your heels! I'll see if you can hold your own beside our Sich dancers. (*Softly, to Nazar.*) Cheer up, I say, it'll all turn out all right.

NAZAR: We'll see, we'll see.... But do me a favour and don't dally. Be off with you!

GHNATT: There's time and to spare to take the goats to the fair! And stop frowning or you'll ruin everything. We'll watch the dancing for a bit before we go.

(Conversing in low tones, they move to the back of the stage. The music starts up. One of the Cossacks jumps out onto the floor and begins to dance. Ghnatt and Nazar stand watching him admiringly.)

GHNATT: Good lad! A true Zaporozhian Cossack! (*The dance ends.*) Come, all, make merry! Go to it, lads! As for us, we must be off. It's a long way to Chigirin, and we have to be there by daybreak. Goodbye, lads, goodbye, lassies, goodbye, Katerina.... Where's that minx of Kichaty's, now?

(Styokha tries to hide behind the Cossacks, but Ghnatt is quick to catch and to kiss her.)

GHNATT: Goodbye, my sweet one, goodbye, my lovely one, goodbye, my clever one!

STYOKHA (*breaking free*): Oh-oh-oh! I'll scream, I swear to God, I will!

(Nazar and Ghnatt make for the door, Katerina sees them off.)

STYOKHA (*preening herself*): Oh, those Cossacks, always after a girl! Nothing on their minds but kissing and coddling. (*To Katerina.*) Come, Auntie, let's you and me dance.... (*Dances and sings.*)

O'er the hill I will go,
And the hills will hide me.
But the bold
Cossack lads
Will be sure to find me.

They will speak pretty words,
Pretty and endearing,
But I'll only
Be won
With a pair of earrings.

Oh, my earrings of gold,
Large they are and heavy.
Look at them,
Rivals mine,
And you'll burst with envy!

KATERINA (*freeing herself from Styokha's grasp.*): Oh, my little bird! It isn't right for me, at my age, to be joining you.

(Meanwhile Styokha has been flirting with the Cossacks. Catching a young lad by the hand, she whirls round and round and taps her heels.)

KATERINA: Enough, lass! You're naughty, you are!
STYOKHA (*dancing and singing*):

Tra-la-la! Tra-la-la!
Having money to spare,
Tra-la-la! Tra-la-la!
Go I did to the fair.
First I bought me some shoes
And some wine, red and white,
Then a fiddler I hired
To make music all night.

(*To the fiddlers.*) Play, curse you, play! Taking our good money for nothing. You should be paid in pork, that you should. (*Laughter in the*

crowd.) Where's Kirik? Come here, Kirik. Our Kirik's better than all those beggars taken together.

(The minstrel steps forward.)

STYOKHA: Ah, there you are, my dear! Come, now, let's have a song, a gay one, or else a tale so scary it'll keep us all awake the night through.

MINSTREL: Whatever you please. Is it to be a tale or a song, then?

VOICES: A tale! A tale!

OTHER VOICES: No, a song, and one to fire the blood! We haven't danced yet.

FIRST VOICES (*with Styokha shouting louder than anyone*): You'll have your fill of dancing before morning.

STYOKHA: It's still a good while before the cocks start crowing. Let's have a tale! (*To Katerina.*) What say, Auntie, is it to be a tale?

KATERINA: Aye, afore it is too late. With the night upon us, we'll be too scared to listen to one.

MINSTREL: Let it be a tale, then, it's all the same to me.

VOICE IN THE CROWD: Got her own way she has, the chatterbox!

ANOTHER VOICE: Saucy lass!

STYOKHA: It's having the last word that counts!

(The minstrel seats himself on a bench. The young people crowd around him. There is much talk and laughter.)

STYOKHA (*offering the minstrel a glass of wine*): Drink, Grandpa, it'll do you good.

MINSTREL (*drinks*): Thank you, lass. (*Clears his throat.*) The ear's like a palate, and words are like food, so pray savour each one, and they'll make you feel good. Do not bother your neighbours or dangle your feet, keep your whiskers well out of the soup while you eat.

Sit there silent and listen, don't grumble or scold, keep your thoughts to yourself while a tale you hear told.

(Whispering and laughter in the crowd.)

STYOKHA: Let's hear you tell us something fearsome, something as will make even *my* blood run cold!

VOICE: If you won't keep quiet, take yourself off, lass!

ANOTHER VOICE: Aye, or we'll drive you out!

STYOKHA: Bold as brass, aren't you! Kichaty will hang you all.

VOICE: Not likely! Take care you don't hang by his side!

KATERINA: Be still, for the love of God! (*To the minstrel.*) Tell your tale, Grandpa. We'll never hear the end of it if we listen to them.

MINSTREL (*clearing his throat*): In the land of the Magyars and Austrians, that lies beyond that of the Poles, there rears a high mountain, and in that mountain there is a deep cave where no bird lives and no beast lurks, but where the sovereign of the Turks, an ageless queen from overseas, has dwelled for many centuries. As time goes on she grows no older, yet 'tis her heart that ever colder and fiercer turns: from morn till night (O gruesome and most cruel sight!) she sits there and devours strange food: not bread, nor fruit, nor chicken, but little children. And why, you will ask? Because when she lived in her native Turkey waiting for her daughter to be born an Armenian mage told her that this daughter, when she grew up, would be a thousand times more beautiful than she. So no sooner was the daughter born than she ate her up, and ever since she has been sitting in her cave and gobbling up children, boys and girls, and it matters not to her if they be baptised or not.

STYOKHA (*quickly*): Boys, too? May she be thrice cursed, the old hag! It's lucky she is that I don't know where that mountain is.

VOICE: What would you have done had you known?

STYOKHA: Strangled the witch, that's what.

VOICE: Don't boast, you little coward!

SECOND VOICE: Why, you fear to step out of doors by yourself.

STYOKHA: Who? I?

VOICES: Hush! Let the man tell his tale.... Yes, you! Who else?

STYOKHA: So I'm a coward, am I? Just say the word, and I'll be off for the graveyard this minute, or... or even the old roadside tavern, if it please you more.

VOICE: Ha! Quick, aren't you! Why, you'll drop dead before you so much as step over the threshold.

STYOKHA: Will I now? What do you stake?

VOICE: The money as will pay the fiddlers for a night's work. What about you?

STYOKHA: Half a pail of plum brandy, three pounds of bacon and a loaf of bread.

VOICE: Good. Only see that the brandy comes from a lord's stores.

STYOKHA: Is it any business of yours where I get it? Now, where's my coat? (*Puts on her coat.*) Don't you back out, though. (*To the minstrel.*) You'll tell your story to the end when I come back, Grandpa, and not before, if you want to please me. (Goes out.)

MINSTREL: All right, lass.

SOMEONE IN THE CROWD: And to prove you've been there, bring a piece of brick or a tile from the stove or whatever you like, so long as it comes from the tavern.

STYOKHA (*off stage*): I will!

VOICES: A daring lass! That she is!

SECOND VOICE: Give her a pair of whiskers and a Cossack queue, and she'll brave the fires of hell itself!

THIRD VOICE: Anybody'd think she was a Cossack.

KATERINA: She's a daredevil! None of you can compare with her!... As for you, you'll lose your stake.

ONE OF THE MEN: Who knows! I may yet be eating that bacon and drinking it down with plum brandy.

KATERINA: We'll see.... But what are we doing, just sitting here? Let's dance and let the fiddlers sweat for their money. Come, you, give us some music! And play it good and loud too.

(Everyone draws back, and a young lad and girl step forward. The music starts up, and the dancing begins. The curtain slowly drops.)

ACT THREE

(The ruins of an old tavern. The walls are standing, but there is no ceiling and only a few rafters are left. Moonlight silvers the snow that has drifted in and lies about in piles. There are a few moments of complete silence which is then broken by the strains of a song coming nearer and nearer. Styokha appears singing "Oh, my earrings of gold..." in faltering tones. She stops by the broken-down stove and looks timidly about her.)

STYOKHA: It's faint with fear I am! Where can they be? I don't see the horses either. What if they've left without me? Wouldn't that be fine! To have sold my good fortune for two pieces of gold.... (*Examines the footprints on the snow.*) No one's been here but I.... What if they tricked me and took another road?... The more fool I!.... A *sotnik's* wife—humph! I had better get me back home and see what's brewing. If the master learns that I took a hand in this, I'm done for.

(Styokha hurries back the way she came. Nazar, bearing Galya in his arms, comes toward her.)

STYOKHA: Oh, it's you!... A fearful place this.... Has aught happened?

NAZAR (*setting Galya on her feet*): No, have no fear. Are the horses here?

STYOKHA: I haven't seen them.

NAZAR: Go and look again, and if you don't see them, run to the village and perhaps you'll come across them on the way.

GALYA: Why do you stand there, Styokha? Make haste, run! Father might wake.

STYOKHA: I'm off, miss! I'd fly to the ends of the earth for your sake. (*Hastily breaks a piece of tile off the stove.*)

GALYA: What are you doing?

STYOKHA: That's to keep the wolves away. (*Walks quickly away.*)

GALYA: Let's go out on the road.... This place frightens me.

NAZAR: We mustn't, dear one, we don't want to be seen.... No one will come in here.

GALYA (*sadly*): All right, then, just as you like.... Oh Lord! Father is sure to wake at dawn.... Oh, Nazar, what have I done!

NAZAR: Only what was good and proper.

GALYA: Father will curse me.

NAZAR: Don't think of it, let him curse himself.... You are cold, little love. Here, let me spread out my cape for you. (*Removes his cape and spreads it out on the snow.*) Rest, dear heart, rest and let me cover your feet with my hat. (*Galya sits down on the cape. Nazar takes off his hat and tucks her feet into it.*) There, that should keep them warm. (*Kisses her.*) You're warmer now, aren't you, sweetheart?

GALYA: Yes, and so happy, Nazar! But the thought of Father frightens me, you don't know how strict he can be.

NAZAR: While I'm with you, my little bird, you need fear nothing. Love me and all will be well.... When I came and saw the matchmakers I thought that you.... I thought—

GALYA: What did you think? Were they dark thoughts?

NAZAR. Dark? Nay.... But not happy ones either. But why recall sad things when one's heart is full of

joy!... And as for what is to be—why, I know I shall die, die of pure happiness.... (*Puts his head on her knees. Galya gently strokes his hair. Lifting his head, he gazes at her tenderly.*) Look at me, brown eyes, you that are as bright as stars, look at me!... (*Pause.*) You never promised your father that you would wed the Colonel, did you, sweetheart?

GALYA: What, again? How strange you are! You'll make me cry, really you will. My father never even mentioned the Colonel, so how could I have made him any such promise?

NAZAR: My poor little one! He wanted to sell you, and you—you suspected nothing.... Forgive him, Galya. Let God judge him and punish him.

GALYA: I will pray for him. Who knows!—perhaps God will forgive him.

NAZAR: Pray for whoever you will, but never stop loving me, my Galya.... I shall die if you do....

GALYA: You *are* strange—to think so lightly of my love.... Yet, yet.... it is more than love I feel for you, it's—oh, how shall I explain it? I do not know what it is that comes over me at times, it almost frightens me.... I look at you, and it's as if you were I, and I were you.... It's wondrous strange, and I cannot tell why this should be so. When I am by myself I keep thinking of you, and then, then I seem to see you in Chigirin mounted on your sable horse.... You prance about near the Hetman's house, and the Hetmans' and colonels' ladies have eyes for none but you.... Then everything goes dark before my eyes, and I weep and cannot stop so heavy is my heart! Why is this so, do you know, Nazar?

NAZAR: I do know, dear heart, I do! It's sweet to hear you speak so! Speak some more and let me hold you close. (*They embrace and kiss.*) Kiss me again, love, again. (*Puts his head on her knee.*)

GALYA: I'm so happy to be with you, Nazar!... Will it always be so? Tell me.

NAZAR (*without lifting his head*): All our lives.
GALYA: Where will we go?
NAZAR: To paradise.
GALYA: I know. But where is paradise?
NAZAR (*lifting his head*): Ask nothing of me now, for I know nothing.... We shall go where we will be alone and free; without the Colonel or your father to order us about. We'll know freedom, freedom and happiness.... Life will be wonderful!... I'll build you a house, a tall and beautiful house, and paint its walls red and black and green and blue.... I'll dress you in silk and gold, and have you sit on a golden chair, like a queen, and I'll gaze at you and never have my fill of it till the day I die.... But stay, will I ever die? No, never! For with you there beside me, death will not dare to enter our house.
GALYA (*sadly*): Speak not so, Nazar! I cannot bear such talk. It fills my heart with pain, with fear of some great sorrow to come....
NAZAR: Sorrow? No, love. We shall know no such thing as sorrow, ever.
GALYA: Truly, Nazar? You know not how heavy my heart is. I keep thinking of my father....
NAZAR: Then stop thinking of him, and you will be happy. You and I will go to Kodak, a Zaporozhian town. As soon as we are there we'll find a church and get married. The Hetman himself will be powerless to part us then, and we'll live together and have a long and happy life. You will sing and dance, and I will play the bandore and tell you stories of Cossack glory, of Savva Chaliy, Svirgovsky and other brave men like them. You will bear me a son, and when he grows to manhood and is a tall and handsome youth we shall take him to the Sich. There will I place him before a gathering of Cossacks and say: "Look at this lad, all, feast your eyes on him—he is my son, and it was Galya who brought him up to be so strong and

brave...." Well, now, does that cheer you?

GALYA: It does, Nazar, it does!... Yet, for all that, the pain in my heart does not lift. It's because I know Father must be awake and looking for me....

NAZAR: God knows what you find to think about! The horses will be here any minute now, and your father and those others will not find us even if they turn the whole world upside down! Do not grieve, my little bird.

GALYA: You know what, Nazar? Let us go home and throw ourselves at my father's feet. He will forgive us, he loves me.

NAZAR: Did I not plead with him, did I not stand on my knees before him? You were there, you saw me.

GALYA: Yes, I know, I know.... But he is my own father, Nazar!

NAZAR: Better had you never known such a father!

GALYA: You are angry, Nazar? Do not be, my sweet, my dear love! Look at me. I'm happy, I don't regret having left my—having left everything behind me. Kiss me, Nazar, kiss me, my love....

(They embrace and kiss.)

NAZAR: Oh, my joy, light of my heart! Do not be sad. So fast will we fly from here that not even the wind will overtake us.... But what a night this is, what a beautiful night! It's as if it were trying to make us happier still, so tranquil is it, so bright, so full of magic.... You are not afraid, are you, love? Bide here a while, and I'll go and take a look at the road.

GALYA: I am not afraid.

NAZAR: Then why do you look so sad again?

GALYA: It's nothing, it's just that I recalled my nurse, dead for many a year now, telling me about this tavern. She said that many, many years ago a Cossack sergeant from the Sich spent the night here and was fished out of the Tyasmin River on the following morning, that it was here

Bogdan met the Cossacks bearing his son's body, covered with red Chinese cloth, from Moldavia,[112] and that it was here the Zaporozhian Cossacks cut down the Jews. No one has lived in the tavern since, she told me, for it is haunted by the ghosts of the slaughtered.... Oh, what a fearful place it is!

NAZAR: A pretty string of tales your nurse spun for you!

GALYA: She swore she was speaking the truth. Stay here, don't leave me, or else let me go with you. I cannot bear to be parted from you for even a second.

NAZAR: I'll not leave you.... Not cold, are you?

GALYA: No, your hat is so warm. (*Pulls the hat off her feet and kisses it.*) Your dear, dear hat! Put it on, you must be cold yourself.

NAZAR: No, you put it on. I want to see what you look like in my hat.

(Galya puts on the hat. Nazar looks at her admiringly.)

NAZAR: Splendid! All you need is a dark moustache, a sabre of Damascus steel and a pistol at the belt, and you'll make a dashing Cossack! (*Kisses her.*) Oh, my Cossack, my black-browed Cossack!

GALYA (*removing the hat and slipping it on his head*): That's better! Wait, let me pin a ribbon onto it. A bridegroom always has a ribbon pinned to his hat on his wedding day.

NAZAR: There'll be time enough to pin it on tomorrow.

GALYA: Oh, I forgot! I've brought along the kerchief I embroidered for you. (*Takes a white kerchief embroidered with red silk from her bosom and hands it to Nazar.*) Pretty, isn't it? I embroidered it myself and I purchased the thread with my own money.

NAZAR: Thank you, beloved.

GALYA: Shall I sing you a song about a kerchief? I heard it in my aunt's house in Chigirin.

NAZAR: Yes, if it's a gay song.

GALYA: It isn't, but it'll pass the time away. So listen. (*Moves to front of stage.*)

(Nazar stands lost in thought.)

GALYA: What makes you so sad? I won't sing if it makes you sad.

NAZAR: Do not be troubled, dear heart. Take your kerchief. (*Hands her the kerchief.*) You'll give it me again tomorrow.

GALYA: I don't want it. Throw it away if you don't like it, I'll embroider you another. (*Sadly.*) Only I don't know when that will be. (*A pause. Begins to cry softly.*)

NAZAR: Do not cry, my love. See how cheerful I am!

GALYA: You are not. There were tears in your eyes, I saw them. There is something you know and won't tell me, I know you do. Come, my own love, come my dear one, tell me what it is, don't keep it from me!...

NAZAR: I know but one thing, sweetheart, and that is that I am the happiest man on earth.

GALYA: I am even happier! And I'll never sing that song about the kerchief, never!

NAZAR: I'll teach you to sing another song, the gayest and best there is.

(Their eyes meet, they cling to each other and kiss, unaware that Khoma and Styokha have stolen up to them.)

KHOMA: Here! Here! I have found them!

GALYA: It's Father!... I'm done for!

STYOKHA (*running past them*): The Colonel's bride! The Colonel's bride!

(Nazar silently puts his left arm round Galya and draws his sabre with his right hand. Khoma, followed by his servants, comes swiftly at him. Styokha hides.)

KHOMA (*wrathfully*): Yes, kiss, kiss, you love doves! (*To the servants.*) Why do you stand there? Use your sticks! Beat up the dog! Crush every bone in his body!

(The servants make no move to do as he says.)

NAZAR: Come at me, he who holds his life cheap! (*To Khoma.*) What do you want?
KHOMA: For you to die, you bandit!
NAZAR: Why do you set your hounds on me? Why do you not fight me yourself?
KHOMA: I didn't want to soil my hands, but now—now I'll cut you to pieces, dog!

(Their sabres clash.)

GALYA (*falling on her knees between them*): Father! Kill me!.... I am to blame, it was I who angered you.... Kill me, Father!... I'd rather die than go with you!
KHOMA: Hold your tongue, minx!
NAZAR (*to Khoma*): Be still, you demon!
KHOMA: Give me back my daughter!
GALYA: Don't do it, Nazar! Don't do it! I'll drown myself if you do!
KHOMA: Yes, drown yourself, do—drown yourself before I trample you to death!
GALYA: Trample me, choke me, kill your child!
KHOMA (*to the servants*): Seize him, and I'll shower you with gold! Stay away, and I'll hang you all!

(The servants throw themselves at Nazar.)

GALYA: He'll trick you! I know he will!
KHOMA: I will not! Stop whimpering, you blind puppy!

(Khoma and the servants throw themselves at Galya. Nazar tries to shield her with his body, but the servants pounce on him from the back, seize him and bind his hands.)

KHOMA: Ha-ha! Well, why don't you tear us with your teeth, wolf?
NAZAR: Keep away from me, you slimy toad!
GALYA (*on her knees before Khoma*): Oh, my Father, my hangman! I will kill you, and I will weep over you! I will weep day and night, dancing as I weep!.... Spare Nazar's life, and I will do as you desire.... I.... I'll marry the Colonel....

NAZAR: Galya!

GALYA: No.... No.... (*Swoons away.*)

KHOMA (*to the servants*): What are you waiting for? Flay the skin off his back, let the cur die!

(One of the servants goes at Nazar with a stick.)

KHOMA: Stay, we are not Tatars. Why should we kill him! Has anyone a coil of rope, reins or a belt? We'll bind him hand and foot.

(The servants tie up Nazar with their belts.)

STYOKHA (*kneeling beside Galya who is still in a swoon*): My poor little bird! How could I have known things would take such a turn? Awake, my little one! Awake, my pretty one!

KHOMA: Good, good! Now let us gag him. He has a kerchief in his hand, I see. A wedding kerchief, I'll wager.... We'll use that. It'll be good for something at least. (*Gags Nazar and pulls the kerchief tight.*) We won t make it overtight. The frost is fierce, but he may hold out. And if a pack of wolves should be passing by—wolves sense their prey from afar—they'll have an early morning feast as rich as the Hetman's own!... Lay him on this snowy feather bed here.... Let him lie there and think whom it was he dared to mock!

(The servants force Nazar down onto the snow.)

KHOMA (*pointing at Galya*): The lass must have fainted from the heat.... Carry her home! She'll come to by and by.

(The servants lift Galya and carry her off.)

STYOKHA (*taking Khoma's arm and leading him after them*): Well, will you say now that I do not love you?

KHOMA: Thank you, lass, thank you. (*To Nazar.*) Adieu, my friend! Think kindly of me, and may your dreams be all of a happy wedding.

(Khoma and Styokha walk away, whispering to each other. Nazar moans softly. A few moments later shouts and the noise of a scuffle are heard off stage.)

KHOMA's VOICE (*from afar*): Put her down! Bind him!
GHNATT (*off stage*): Just try and do that, you traitor!

(Galya rushes onto the stage and flies to Nazar's side.)

GALYA: My love! My dear one! (*Unties the kerchief and removes the gag from Nazar's mouth.*)
NAZAR: I can't breathe!
GHNATT (*leading in Khoma whom he has clutched by the lapels of his coat*): I am asking you for the last time—will you or will you not permit Galya to wed Nazar?
KHOMA: No!
GHNATT: Then die, you mad dog! (*Brandishes his sabre threateningly.*)
KHOMA: Stay! Do you not know our Cossack custom?
GHNATT: That if I kill you they will bury me alive beside your rotten corpse? Aye, I know it! (*To the servants.*) Dig the grave, you! (*Takes aim with his pistol.*)
KHOMA: Stop him!

(Meanwhile, Galya is undoing the belt binding Nazar's arms.)

NAZAR: My love! My dear love!
GHNATT: Dig the grave, I say! (*Taking aim, to Khoma.*) Would you die without confessing your sins and so sell your soul to the devil? Would you drag me with you to hell? Bid farewell to this world, you viper, and say your last prayers. (*To Nazar.*) Nazar, my good friend, my brother! Bury me as befits an honest man. Farewell, Nazar! We—
NAZAR: Stay!...
GALYA (*to Ghnatt*): Stay!
NAZAR: Let him go. You are too good a man to die because of him. Do not sacrifice your immortal soul. (*To Khoma.*) Go your way, you schemer! God has not let you destroy me, and I want no

man's blood on my hands. Begone!

KHOMA (*throws himself at Nazar's feet*): Nazar! My son! My friend! Stab me, quarter me, tear me limb from limb, only do not forgive me! (*Prostrates himself before him, weeping loudly.*) It's a schemer I am, a sinful schemer and accursed by God!... Oh my daughter, my child, my life! Plead with him, beg him to kill me that I may not defile the world with my presence! (*Sobs loudly.*)

NAZAR (*lifting him to his feet*): Stand up and pray to God, sinner. If men can forgive you, so surely will He in His mercy.

KHOMA (*wiping away his tears*): Oh tears of mine, tears of mine! Why did you not flow before? I shall take vows, Nazar, and don a monk's robes. In prayer shall I absolve my soul from sin! Take my gold, take my daughter, take all I have!... Galya! Nazar! Embrace and kiss, my children. I may be a sinner, but I am a father still.

(Nazar and Galya embrace.)

KHOMA: May God bless you!

1843, 1844

Translated by Irina Zheleznova

NOTES

[1] In Ukrainian folklore *rusalki*—mermaids were deemed to be spirits of female babies that were abandoned by their (unwed) mothers and died before they were baptised. Superstitious people believed *rusalki* came out of the water at night and killed wayfarers by tickling them to death.

[2] In the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the Ukraine decided their affairs at general meetings (Cossack councils).

[3] Perebendya—a talkative person.

[4] V. A. Zhukovsky (1783-1852) was a noted Russian poet and translator who helped to buy Shevchenko's freedom from serfdom, which event took place on April 22, 1838.

[5] Muscovites—tsarist soldiers. While originally this term referred to inhabitants of Moscow principality, later it was applied to all Russians and also to soldiers of all nationalities that served in the Russian army.

[6] The poem is given incomplete (six sections out of fourteen) in this volume. The name Haidamaki was given by the Polish gentry to the peasant rebels that operated together with the Cossacks on the part of the Ukraine that still remained under Polish rule during the eighteenth century. The word is of Turkic origin and means "unruly ones". The height of the Haidamaki movement, known as Koliyivshchina, was reached in 1768, and this is the theme of Shevchenko's poem.

[7] V. I. Grigorovich, conference-secretary of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, helped to gain Shevchenko's freedom from serfdom.

[8] Sotnik—a centurion in the Cossack army.

[9] Skutari, a suburb of Istambul.

[10] In feudal Poland the sejm (diet, parliament) was the form by which the actual government by the great magnates was realised. The nobles (*szlachta*) sent representatives to the sejm to decide major issues, such as election of the king, making war, etc. The magnates, each ruling undividedly in his domains, forestalled centralisation by the veto. If but one voice shouted "*Nie pozwalam*!" (I do not permit it), the measure under consideration was dropped and the sejm adjourned.

[11] Stanislaw II August Poniatowski, the last king of Poland (1764-95), while nominally elected by the sejm was in fact the tool of the Russian tsars.

[12] The Confederates were armed unions of Polish nobles that sprang up in opposition to Poniatowski's rule, especially to the edict giving the Orthodox gentry equal rights with the Roman Catholic.

[13] In the eighteenth century money relations had already deeply permeated the feudal system, commerce and usury were highly developed, the big landowners often leased their estates for money to entrepreneurs, including those of Jewish nationality. In rising against the Polish nobles the peasant rebels often also attacked the Jewish merchants, usurers and lessees of estates.

[14] Ivan Gonta, a sotnik of the Uman court Cossacks in the service of the Polish magnate Potocki, joined the Haidamaki. When the rising was suppressed by the Poles with the help of Russian troops, Gonta was killed after being inhumanly tortured.

[15] Maxim Zaliznyak, a Zaporozhian Cossack, one of the Haidamaki leaders, was seized by the Russian military after the suppression of the revolt and sentenced to be flogged, branded and exiled for life to hard labour in Siberia.

[16] Halaida means a homeless person, a tramp.

[17] There is no historical record of Gonta killing his sons.

[18] The term "Haidamaki" was later applied to denote highwaymen.

[19] Hamaliya is fictional, although the events described in the poem are based on historical fact. Zaporozhian Cossacks crossed the Black Sea in boats and attacked Istambul and razed its suburbs a number of times.

[20] Veliky Luh (The Great Meadow) was the land near the mouth of the Dnieper River, where the Zaporozhian Cossacks fished, hunted and pastured their herds of horses. Khortitsya is the island in the Dnieper where the Zaporozhian Sich was located.

[21] Byzantium was the general name of the Greek empire that was conquered by the Turks in the fifteenth century, but Shevchenko here means the capital of that empire, Constantinople, which was renamed Istambul by the Turks. Among ancient Slays the city was also called Tsargrad or Tsarhorod (the emperor's city).

[22] Hetman Petro Konashevich-Sahaidachny became famous for his campaigns against the Turks. Sahaidachny was not a monk. He died in 1622 of wounds received in battle.

[23] Ivan Pidkova led Cossack campaigns against the Turks in the second half of the sixteenth century.

[24] This poem, a merciless satire on the tsarist regime and on Tsar Nicholas I and the empress personally, was the main cause for the severe sentence forbidding writing and painting meted to Shevchenko by the tsar.

[25] Exiled revolutionaries, the Decembrists. (In December 1825, a group of officers organised an uprising of sections of the armed forces in an attempt to overthrow the absolute feudal monarchy; the rising

was defeated, and some of its leaders were executed, while others were sentenced to penal servitude in Siberia.)

[26] St. Petersburg, built early in the eighteenth century by Peter I (the Great) in the marshes on the Gulf of Finland as "the window into Europe".

[27] Khokhol was a derogatory name for Ukrainians.

[28] Shevchenko has in mind those Ukrainians who served the tsarist government as clerks and petty officials.

[29] On the monument erected to Peter I the Empress Catherine II had inscribed the dedication: "To Peter the First—Catherine the Second".

[30] Acting Hetman of the Ukrainian Cossacks Pavlo Polubotok was imprisoned in the Petropavlovsk fortress in Petersburg for actions hostile to Tsar Peter I, and died in prison in 1724.

[31] Not only many thousands of serfs from various parts of Russia, but also Ukrainian Cossacks were impressed to build St. Petersburg. Thousands perished of cold, hunger and inhuman labour.

[32] P. Šafařik (1795-1861), Czech scholar and Slavist, proponent of the unity of the Slavic nations and liberation of the Slavic peoples from Austro-German domination.

[33] Jan Hus (1369-1415), a Czech patriot and one of the leaders of the Reformation, was condemned by the synod of the Roman Catholic Church and burned at the stake as a heretic.

[34] Constanz, the city in present-day Switzerland where Hus was tried and executed.

[35] A chapel in Praha (Prague), where Hus preached against the Papal indulgencies beginning with 1412.

[36] Pope's decree. Here is meant the Bull on the sale of indulgencies by which absolution from sins could be purchased.

[37] Anti-Popes were pretenders to the Papal throne. Towards the end of the 14th century there was one Pope in Rome and another in Avignon. At the beginning of the 15th century the Conclave at Pisa dethroned both and elected a third. Later, at the Constanz Conclave, he was deposed and a fourth Pope was elected.

[38] A play on words. Hus means goose in Ukrainian.

[39] The conclave of the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church.

[40] German emperor Sigismund and his brother, Vaclav, the king of Bohemia.

[41] Jan Žižka led the war of the Hussites against the forces of the Pope and the German emperor following the execution of Hus.

[42] Yakov de Balmen, an artist friend of Shevchenko, was killed while serving as an officer in the tsarist army that was waging a war of conquest against the Circassian people in the Caucasian Mountains.

[43] The Russian tsar.

[44] This poem is directed to the Ukrainian gentry and bourgeois intellectuals, urging them to stop orientating on outside influences and turn to the Ukraine and the struggle to liberate the serfs.

[45] German reactionary teachings perverted the history and ethnography of the Slavic peoples.

[46] Slavists in Czechoslovakia.
[47] Shevchenko criticises the idealisation of the history of the Ukraine, pointing out that the Hetmans often served foreign masters.
[48] After the destruction of the Sich, Empress Catherine II donated large tracts of land in the Ukraine to German colonists.
[49] This poem became a revolutionary hymn of the Ukrainian people.
[50] Phaseolus multiflorus.
[51] N. Kostomarov (1817-1885), Ukrainian writer, historian and professor at Kiev University, was one of the organisers of the Society of Cyril and Methodius, and exponent of nationalist liberal views within it. Arrested at the same time as Shevchenko, N. Kostomarov was exiled to Saratov, where he was employed as a government official. He was later permitted to go to St. Petersburg and lecture at the University there.
[52] The autobiographical impression left by this poem, and also the preceding one, gives reason to presume that they are devoted to Oksana Kovalenko, a serf girl and the poet's childhood friend.
[53] The poem is devoted to Semen Paliy, a Cossack colonel, hero of the peasant war against the Polish gentry, who was falsely accused of treason and arrested by Hetman Ivan Mazepa in 1704 and was then exiled by Tsar Peter I to Siberia. After Mazepa went over to King Charles XII of Sweden and his treachery became manifest, Peter the Great recalled Paliy from exile, and he took part in the battle of Poltava in 1709 where the Swedes were defeated. Paliy was never a monk.
[54] Hetman Ivan Mazepa.
[55] Paliy was arrested by Mazepa at Berdichev.
[56] Siberian river where penal settlements were located.
[57] District where Paliy was commanding officer of the Cossacks.
[58] In Greek mythology Apollo was the god of the arts, his sister was one of the nine muses.
[59] Rogvolod, prince of Polotsk in the second half of the tenth century.
[60] Grand Prince Vladimir (in Ukrainian, Volodimir) of Kiev Rus (circa 980-1015), adopted Christianity and proclaimed it the state religion. He was canonised by the Church.
[61] This poem is based on an actual incident, when the tsarist governor-general was assaulted in a Kiev church, the assailant being later declared "insane" by the authorities.
[62] Tsar Nicholas I.
[63] In the 1840s the Kiev, Podolia and Volyn provinces of the Ukraine were ruled by Governor-General D. G. Bibikov, and the Kharkov, Poltava and Chernigov provinces by Governor-General Prince M. A. Dolgorukov. Bibikov was one-armed, while the name Dolgorukov means long-armed.
[64] Bibikov's bailiff for Kiev Province, M. Y. Pisarev.
[65] Ukrainians who collaborated with the tsarist regime.
[66] St. Petersburg. Shevchenko wrote this poem during his return journey from exile, while waiting in Nizhny Novgorod for permission to enter the capital.

[67] God was often painted as an eye in icons.
[68] Revolutionaries sentenced to penal servitude and exile.
[69] The Orthodox Church.
[70] Mountains in Palestine.
[71] According to T. Shevchenko's contemporaries, this poem was dedicated to a miss Krupitskaya whom the poet saw at a students' party in the Medical Academy.
[72] Shevchenko's sister Yarina, two years his junior and the companion of his childhood, remained a serf during the poet's life. Serfdom was abolished in Russia in 1861.
[73] The convent.
[74] Likera Polusmakova, a serf-girl, whom Taras Shevchenko wanted to marry in the last years of his life.
[75] The first half of the novel is largely autobiographical, as though Ivan Soshenko were the narrator, describing the discovery of the young Shevchenko and his liberation from serfdom.
[76] The Popes of the Roman Catholic Church.
[77] Shirayev was the guildmaster of painting and fresco decoration to whom Shevchenko was apprenticed in 1832.
[78] A. I. Venetsianov (1780-1847), a prominent Russian artist, assisted in gaining Shevchenko's freedom.
[79] K. P. Bryullov (1799-1852), famous Russian painter, painted Zhukovsky's portrait, which was raffled off to get the money needed to buy Shevchenko's freedom from his master.
[80] A character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, noted for his extraordinary stinginess.
[81] Ivan Kotlyarevsky (1769-1838), one of the first Ukrainian writers to write in the Ukrainian language. His *Aeneid*, a highly original burlesque of Virgil's *Aeneid*, portrays the customs and mores in eighteenth-century Ukraine.
[82] Palmira was an ancient Syrian town renowned for its architecture. In the first half of the nineteenth century poets often referred to St. Petersburg as the Northern Palmira.
[83] Rome.
[84] V. I. Sternberg (1818-1845), an artist and close friend of Shevchenko. They roomed together for some time in Petersburg.
[85] V. I. Dal (1801-1872), outstanding Russian dialectologist and lexicographer, author of the Russian dictionary which is still in use.
[86] Shevchenko wrote the name of Patrocles in error for Hector. The theme is from Homer's *Iliad*.
[87] I. K. Aivazovsky (1817-1900), noted Russian artist, famed for his seascapes.
[88] M. M. Lazarevsky (1818-1867) befriended Shevchenko in Orenburg Province during the latter's exile. Shevchenko donated his diary to Lazarevsky in 1858.
[89] Y. G. Kukharenko (1798-1862), a Ukrainian writer, served in the Black Sea Cossack force.
[90] M. S. Shchepkin (1788-1863), brilliant Russian actor, also a former serf, was one of Shevchenko's closest friends.

[91] B. Zaleski (1820-1880), Polish artist and historian, was also exiled to Orenburg Province by the tsarist regime, and there he and Shevchenko became close friends.

[92] Count F. P. Tolstoy (1783-1873), Russian painter, sculptor and architect, vice-president of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, and his wife, Countess Nastasia Tolstoy, exerted great efforts to secure Shevchenko's return from exile.

[93] Panteleimon Kulish (1819-1897), Ukrainian writer, exponent of liberal and nationalistic views, as opposed to Shevchenko's democratic revolutionary stand.

[94] Ukrainian. Like the Russians and Byelorussians, the Ukrainians are descended from the ancient Rus. The tsarist authorities denied the existence of a separate Ukrainian nationality and language, claiming the latter was simply a dialect of the Russian, and attempted to suppress it. Ukrainian resistance to forced Russianisation included objection to the name Little Russian, which formerly had no objectionable connotation (as witnessed by Shevchenko's use of it), and the term was discarded.

[95] *Aesthetics, or Wisdom of Beauty by Karol Libelt.* K. Libelt (1807-1875), Polish idealist philosopher and art critic.

[96] I. A. Uskov, commandant of the Novopetrovsk fortress.

[97] Stepan (Stenka) Razin, leader of an uprising of the Don Cossacks and peasant serfs of Russia against the feudal autocracy (1667-1671). Razin was captured by the tsarist forces and executed.

[98] Tsar Nicholas I.

[99] Pseudonym of the Russian revolutionary democrat A. I. Herzen (1812-1870), who was compelled to emigrate from Russia, established a printshop in London and published papers and pamphlets that were smuggled into Russia.

[100] M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889), outstanding Russian satirist.

[101] Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), great Russian writer, Ukrainian by nationality, author of *Dead Souls, The Inspector-General, Taras Bulba,* etc.

[102] The Kremlin was the centre of a medieval Russian city, surrounded by a fortified wall.

[103] Citizen Kuzma Minin and Prince Dmitry Pozharsky led the Russian people to rout the Polish invaders in the seventeenth century.

[104] S. S. Gulak-Artemovsky (1813-1873), Ukrainian singer and composer, wrote both the libretto and music of the opera *Cossack Beyond the Danube.*

[105] Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitsky (1600-1657) led the Ukrainian war of national liberation from the Polish monarchy, culminating in the reunification of the Ukraine with Russia in 1654.

[106] Sister of Tsar Alexander II.

[107] S. T. Aksakov (1791-1859), a prominent Russian writer.

[108] M. I. Glinka (1804-1857), great Russian composer, founder of Russian classical music. Under official pressure he was compelled to change the title of his opera *Ivan Susanin* for the title *Life for the Tsar.*

[109] He allowed the matchmaker to be received and treated to food and drink, in spite of it being Christmas lent.

[110] The Bratsk Monastery in Kiev is implied.

[111] There were no women inside the Sich, and the families of the Cossacks lived in nearby villages.

[112] The reference is to Timosh Khmelnitsky, Bogdan's eldest son who was killed in 1653 in one of the Cossacks' Moldavian campaigns.

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N. Dobrolyubov